J. R. Landis.
Dayton, Ohio,
Jan. 12, 1924.

THE ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETY

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL BETTERMENT

THE SOCIAL IDEAL AND DR. CHALMERS' CONTRIBUTION TO CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL LIFE

EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

MONEY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS: A STUDY IN ECONOMICS

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HUMAN LIFE

THE POST-EXILIC PROPHETS

SOCIAL LIFE

THE ESSENTIALS OF RELIGION

BY

J. WILSON HARPER, D.D.

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS Note is personal and explanatory. In my student days at Glasgow University I was introduced to philosophy by that prince of exponents of mental and moral science, Professor Edward Caird. My interest in philosophic investigations, which has increased with the passing years, is largely due to him; and there are few things which I treasure more than a letter I received from him, on the publication of my *Foundations of Society*, in which he expressed his appreciation of my work.

When I entered the Theological College, Higher Criticism was claiming special attention. As Hebrew tutor I was brought into intimate relation with Principal Douglas, Professor of Hebrew. He, however, had little sympathy with the New Movement; but I then thought, and still think, that Professor Robertson Smith was altogether right when he contended for freedom within the Church to discuss all the questions raised by the Higher Criticism.

While never entirely losing interest in philosophy and Oriental studies, I was early in my ministry attracted to the Social Movement, and was soon convinced that the Social Question needs for its solution the application of well-verified economic principles, and the high ethics of the Christian Faith. For years, while busy with the work of a large congregation, and rendering some service

on local and national Educational Boards, social science, inspired by the ethics of Christianity, has had for me a powerful attraction. The works which I have hitherto published almost all deal with aspects of economics and ethics. But while writing these I have always had the deep conviction that religion and its claims are paramount. There are, however, many beliefs and practices connected with religion which are not of its essence. Few of these are helpful to the religious life. The great majority of them are extremely hurtful. The history of the great ethnic religions proves that the tendency to multiply beliefs and ceremonies is strong and persistent. It also shows the injuries done to religion by this multiplication.

It is only the essentials of religion which count. They are powerful factors in daily life. They also throw a searching light upon the questions which philosophy raises, and likewise supply an adequate motive, and a worthy end of all endeavours after social betterment. The essentials of religion are found in the life and teachings of Christ; and they alone have the key to history, and to the questions of the present and future life who bring all issues into His Presence; who look for the solution of life's problems in the light of His gracious saving message, and in His high ethical teachings; and who hold by a pure evangelism, seeing it in its unity of purpose and in its details of precious truths as these are applied to and interpret the individual and social, the national and international life.

This is a large claim which is made on behalf of the essentials of religion; but I trust that it is in some degree justified by what is written in the following pages.

This work may perhaps be not unacceptable to those who, leading a busy business life, have not time for the study of larger treatises, and yet wish to know, at least in outline, what can be said for religion and its supreme claims. But it is specially offered to students who are preparing for the teaching profession. Within recent years great improvements have been made on educational agencies. The Training Colleges are now well staffed with men and women of approved scholarship, and students in training have facilities within their reach which well equip them for their future life-work. The Scottish Churches, recognising that religious agencies must also be improved, have recently appointed highly qualified Directors of Religious Instruction in each of the Training Colleges. It is their duty and privilege to instruct students as to how to read the Bible, and to give them a large view of what is essential in religion. Of Bible textbooks there are already enough. Something more is needed; and it is hoped that this work will, at least, be a guide as to the lines along which the essentials of religion should be studied.

J. WILSON HARPER.

EDINBURGH, *September* 1922.

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The Essentials of Religion

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AND ITS UNIVERSALITY

I

If one turns from the unverified postulates, on which rests the negation of the existence of God, to the great religions of the world ; and further, if one makes a survey of their distinctive characteristics, abundant evidence is at once forthcoming as to belief in God, or a Power which rules the destinies of men. Such evidence carries with it much instruction, and makes for reflection. It proves, among other things, that notwithstanding the many arguments which intellectualism may parade against belief in a Supreme Being, man everywhere and in all ages, true to his instincts and aspirations, believes in a Power or Powers greater than himself, and which can help him in the hour of his need.

For worship of some object or objects is universal. There are no people yet discovered so far down in the scale of civilisation as not to have some form of religion. "At no time, and in no place, have men been found without religion." [1] This is disputed, and arguments are adduced from savage life as it is seen to-day. But the primitive forms of religion are known very imperfectly, and it is easy for those who deny the universality of religion to make inductions from what is known of savage

[1] *The Saving Truths of Christianity*, by Ernest Luthardt, p. 21.

tribes in favour of their negations. The warning of Max Müller [1] must, however, be steadily kept in view, and care must be taken, as he points out, not to assume anything respecting savage people as to what was their most primitive state from what is now known about them. But this may be safely affirmed, that so far as records go, and travellers among savage tribes testify, religion in some form exists everywhere, and in all times.

This is what might be anticipated; for man is a religious being; he has a religious nature and religious instincts. Where revealed religion is unknown he makes for himself an object of worship. Fetichism, totemism, and animism are the lowest expressions of religion.[2] Fetichism selects a material object which is assumed to possess a magical power that is all its own. Totemism holds sacred a particular object, animate or inanimate. Animism, again, insists upon a definite belief in separate spiritual existences; and it is taken by a writer like E. B. Tylor as the minimum of religion. In his work entitled *Primitive Culture* he regards animism as the crude interpretation by savage people of their religious instincts.

II

1. It is perhaps impossible to say what are the earliest forms of religion. Historical records, especially those of the recently recovered monuments, carry the investigator back to at least 5000 B.C.; but the light is still so dim that nothing definite can be affirmed respecting the earliest religious practices. "The religious life," says Dr. Geden, referring to its first forms, "exhibits itself as a compromise, a blending together of divine elements derived from different sources." [3] He contends that the chief centres of the earliest religion, faith, and worship, were Abýdos in Upper Egypt, and Heliôpolis in

[1] See Müller's *Anthropological Religion*, p. 150.
[2] See *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, by Andrew Lang, p. 60.
[3] See *Studies of the Religions of the East*, p. 70.

the Delta, which date back to prehistoric times. These had their ritual; and their votaries offered in their temples, and at the tombs of the departed, sacrifices, animal and vegetable, with libations and burning of incense.

2. Babylonian religion is at least as ancient as the Egyptian. It cannot, indeed, be definitely affirmed which is the older, just as it cannot be said whether the Babylonians were more civilised than the Egyptians. The very name *Babylonia*, from *Bâb-îli* (gate of God, or of the gods), indicates the religious character of the people. They were indeed intensely devout. Their earliest known gods were Anu, who represented heaven, and Ea, "lord of the deep, possessor of unsearchable wisdom, and creator of all things." Afterwards Merodach, or Marduk, whose chief title was Bel, or Baal, the lord, was worshipped as the light of day, and the giver of all benefits. Other deities were also held in reverence, such as Beltis, the consort of Merodach; Samas, the sun-god; Istar, the goddess Venus; and Nebo, the prophet or teacher. But of the beginnings of their religion and its ritual it may be said, as De Groot remarks respecting China's religion,[1] that they are "lost in the night of ages." This, however, is known, that the Babylonians, Semitic and non-Semitic, observed elaborate religious rites, and witnessed to the universality of religion.

3. The religion of China, though its origin is lost in obscurity, is better known. From its historical beginning till to-day it is pure animism, attributing souls to all things. The dogmas respecting *Yang, good*, and *Yin, evil*, lay the foundation of China's religion. The temples are the centres of the religious life of the people. Feast days fixed by old customs are observed and sacrifices are presented. The heavenly spheres, earth, sun, moon, and stars, with the souls of deified men, constitute the pantheon of China.[2]

[1] See Preface to *The Religion of the Chinese*.
[2] See De Groot, op. cit., chap. iv.

Taoism, the reputed patriarch of which is Lao-tszĕ, who lived at the beginning of the sixth century B.C. and preceded Confucius by fifty years, claims to represent "the order of the Universe." It has its priests and highly developed ritual. It imposes a discipline by which its votaries attain to assimilation with this order. Tao is the Creator spontaneously working from all eternity. Nature is supreme, and Taoism teaches that man must live in harmony with nature, thus anticipating the teachings of Greek moralists who held that man must live according to nature. It has the same pantheon as Confucianism, only the gods are greatly increased in number. These gods must be worshipped and also propitiated in order that man may attain to "the order of the universe," which is the *summum bonum* of life.

This doctrine of the chief good of life is taught in detail in the classic work *Yih*, which divides man's goodness into four qualities—benevolence, righteousness, observance of ceremonies, and knowledge. The man who attains to these is the good man, the god-man, the saint, and one with the original and universal *Yang*. The observance of rites and ceremonies is, however, the chief agency to the attainment of the supreme end. This same doctrine is included in the Taoist books *Li Ki*, *Tao-tih-king*, ascribed to Lao-tszĕ, and *Nan-hwa-Chen-King* by Chwang-tszĕ.

Confucius (551–479 B.C.) flourished after Lao-tszĕ. He is the sage, as Lao-tszĕ is the mystic, of China. Repelled by the latter's vague philosophy of life, and his contradictory exhortations, Confucius developed a system *sui generis*. He was at once a moralist and an historian. He was, indeed, the first writer who attempted a systematic history of China, writing his books of History, Rites, and Odes. As a moralist he insisted on justice, truth, industry, moderation, and the discharge of public duties. He established no priesthood. In his system the objects of worship are the powers of nature, ancestors, and heroes. The ceremonies which belong to this worship are conducted by officials.

It is not difficult to account for the powerful influence which Confucius exerted over the Chinese mind; and to this day his adherents hold firmly by the teachings of the master. Both Lao-tszĕ and he did much to give expression to the religious instincts of the teeming millions of China. Their religious systems have, it should be remembered, been somewhat modified by the introduction into the country of Buddhism in A.D. 67, of Mohammedanism in A.D. 628, and of Christianity about the beginning of the sixth century; but they still persist, and are an additional witness to religion as universal.

4. India offers the same testimony. Vedism, of which the Vedas are the written expression, is the oldest religion of the Indian Aryan. From it came Brahmanism, and what is vaguely known as Hinduism. The Vedas are very ancient, but they were committed to writing in Sanskrit only in the eleventh century A.D. The Mantra and Brāhmanas are the oldest documents, and contain the ritual and sacrifices of Brahmanism.

These at first were simple in form, but in course of time became more and more elaborate. There is, for instance, a great difference between the Mantra and Brāhmanas when compared with the Upanishads, which give the mystical exposition of ceremonies together with the knowledge derived therefrom; and still greater is the difference in Hinduism, using this term, as is now done, to express later and more modern developments of rites and ceremonies.[1] The burning of the widow on the funeral pyre of her late husband, pilgrimages, and ablutions in sacred streams, and the prohibition of widow remarriages are not recognised in the most ancient books. These are later developments, and can be accounted for on the principle that, as time went on, the ritual and ceremonies of Brahmanism, like those of Confucianism and Buddhism, became more and more elaborate. Such is the tendency of the religious spirit universally, unless it be checked by fuller knowledge of what is implied in true religion. But

[1] See Dr. Geden, op. cit., p. 240.

this very tendency, though regrettable, is itself a witness to the intensity and universality of religion.

Buddhism carries with it the same "notes." As Confucius for moral reasons protested against the vague philosophy of Lao-tszĕ, so the Buddha, a Hindu who lived about five centuries before Christ and was born in what is now Nepal, revolted against Brahmanism, which had run to seed in the elaborate and corrupt ritual of Hinduism. He attempted a moral reformation, and was all for self-repression, self-sacrifice, kindliness, chastity, brotherly love, and the equality and brotherhood of man. Buddha wrote nothing. It was not indeed until one hundred and fifty years after his death that the Emperor Asoka, under the guidance of a Council, reduced his teachings to writing. Subsequent Councils revised his doctrines and made many additions to them.

On this account it is now extremely difficult to say what in Buddhism belongs to the author, and how much has been introduced into it from other sources. On its moral side, and in its latest developments, it certainly owes much to Christianity; but as a philosophy of life its teachings are all its own. *Nirvana*, a cessation of individual existence, according to Buddha, is reached by self-repression and contemplation; and this is life's end. But good and evil deeds have somehow a continued existence; and by the doctrine of *Karma*, transmigrations take place, and these deeds, meeting their reward or punishment, find embodiment in some living creature. Hence every living creature is counted sacred; and to kill even an insect is strictly forbidden. Buddhism early developed a monastic system. In retreats a way was found for the attainment of "salvation," *dlyana*, and profound meditation led, as just stated, to *Nirvana*.

On its ethical side Buddhism has many attractive traits. Its love of all that has life makes for pity, disinterestedness, and altruism. But the isolation which it inculcated exposed its adherents to assaults. They were accused of the neglect of family and State duties, especially those

imposed by the Emperor. And, on its theoretical side, the astute Brahmans were quick to assail it. They saw the divisions to which theorisings inevitably lead, and at once declared that the Buddha was an incarnation of *Vishnu*.

Thus they lured many back to Hinduism. Depending entirely upon its mendicant missionaries for its extension, and having neither a theology nor an elaborate ritual, Buddhism gave way to Brahmanism, and to Jainism which quickly developed ascetic rules and prolonged fastings, season feasts and anniversary celebrations of the deaths of holy men. This passion for ritual explains the decay of pure Buddhism, and at the same time is evidence that the religious instinct is universal, and that unless guided by knowledge it is ever craving for gorgeous ritualistic expression.

5. Zoroastrianism confirms the same facts. Founded by Zoroaster about 800 B.C., it is especially notable for its severe monotheism and high morals. "There is," says Dr. Moulton, "no reason whatever for postulating a sacerdotal caste in Aryan times, or in the days of Zarathushtra," [1] but as an old Iranian cult it had its ritual of reverence, and of purification by the sacred fire. Next to fire come earth and water as agencies which make for cleansing. Besides, its sacred books, Zend-Avesta, contain many prayers which are to be repeated again and again, thus proving that the religion as observed by the Persians from the end of the sixth century B.C. till 331 B.C., when it was discarded by the Achæmenian dynasty, and as practised by the modern Parsees, had, and still has, its ritual. This ritual is the outward expression of the religious spirit which everywhere manifests itself and is witness of its universality.

Zoroastrianism is, however, much more than a ritual cult. It is also a system of religious beliefs. "There is only," it affirms, "one God, and no other is to be compared to Him." He is just, merciful, and worthy of the

[1] See *Early Zoroastrianism*, p. 116.

most reverent adoration. It teaches that there are two powerful agencies in the world, good and evil, light and darkness. These are ever in conflict, and the use of fire is that by which all forms of evil are overcome. Its ethical standard is high, demanding benevolence and hospitality. Like the other great ethnic religions, Zoroastrianism witnesses to the religious aspirations of humanity, and is an additional evidence of the universality of religion.

6. Mohammed (A.D. 570–632), the founder of the Moslem Faith, and his millions of followers, testify to the same universal religious instincts and aspirations. Mohammedanism, like Zoroastrianism, is severely monotheistic, proclaiming "there is no deity but God, and Mohammed is His prophet." At first it taught that God rules the world with love and mercy, and further it inculcated philanthropy; but when once it was established at Medina it changed its ethical creed, and strongly declared for intolerance and greed.

Fanaticism has ever since that time been a constant trait of Mohammedanism. Its votaries are exclusive and bigoted. It conquers by the sword, more than by moral agencies. While it forbids the use of strong drink, and condemns usury, it encourages polygamy and slavery. Its strength, as a religion, lies in its claim to special divine revelations; a ritual of fasts, festivals, and pilgrimages; and the absolute terms on which salvation is promised to those who observe its ceremonial enactments. To make a pilgrimage to Mecca is to attain to the honourable title of Hajji.

There are four "pillars of Islam" to which from the beginning till the present time prominence has always been given: (1) Prayers offered five times each day; (2) Fasting, a religious duty; (3) Almsgiving, a legal regulation. The apparent simplicity of Koranic teaching respecting almsgiving "was," says Dr. Margoliouth, "gradually altered into elaborate ritualism." [1] (4) Pilgrimages to Mecca. These are the agencies through which

[1] See *The Early Development of Mohammedanism*, p. 163.

Mohammedanism endeavours to give expression to religious aspirations, and to satisfy them. It relies upon these, plus military power, for its extension and success.

III

The brief survey which has been made of the great ethnic religions shows what good reasons there are for holding that religion is universal. The fact itself is well established, and from the fact many inductions can be made, and also many observations.

(*a*) It is now recognised that all religions have their own methods, agencies, and aims; and that underlying these is the religious spirit of man which gives to them vitality and direction. The development of this spirit, its agencies and aims, presents an instructive and fascinating subject. In its oldest manifestations three well-defined stages are easily traced: (1) Originally gifts are offered to supernatural beings. (2) Next, these gifts are taken as the expression of homage to such beings. (3) A further development takes place and gifts pass into substitutionary offerings. In some religions these stages are more clearly marked than in others, but in all they persist in a certain degree and are evidence of the universal cravings of the religious spirit of man.

(*b*) A special feature in all religions deserves attention. This is the passion for ritualism which prevails everywhere. As has been already pointed out, with the lapse of time, ritual grows in volume, in detail, and in gorgeousness. The outward and sensuous appeal strongly to the vast majority of mankind. This largely explains the tendency of religion towards elaborate ritual, and what satisfies the eye. It is a natural tendency, but it is also one the danger of which was clearly perceived by religious teachers like Confucius and Zoroaster, who personally declared for a moral reformation, and chiefly commended kindliness and disinterested conduct. It was their followers who, losing sight of these fine moral qualities,

gave way to the natural passion for ritual, and adopted gorgeous rites without the observance of which, they taught, salvation could not be found.

In Christianity, little store is set upon ritual. It is life and spirit; it insists upon definite beliefs, and upon high moral conduct. But even among many of those who profess the Christian Faith one sees an undue preference for an elaborate ritual. The High Church Party of the Church of England presents a striking example of the passion for rites and ceremonies, with the result that they often reduce Christian worship to the observance of mere forms. The desire for, and love of ritual, when insisted upon as essential to the Christian Faith, obscures and nullifies the simple terms on which the forgiveness of sin and life eternal are offered to all who accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, Teacher, and King. He insisted upon no ritual; and in the writings of His Apostles there is nothing else that is more distinctive of their teachings than their indifference to forms and ceremonies. Christianity, as they explain it, is not dependent upon the observance of Feasts or Fasts. These may be aids to certain types of mind, but they are not essential; and to make them imperative is to lapse into Judaism, while even to commend them to all Christian people is to run the risk of making the Christian religion formal, and of killing the spirit by the letter.

(*c*) One thing more the fact of the universality of religion brings into prominence. It proves the need for definite religious beliefs. Evidence abounds everywhere in support and demonstration of the truth that religious beliefs are entertained and held by people in all states of civilised and uncivilised life. But religion in its universal sway also shows that only those forms of it survive and persist which carry with them *definite* beliefs. The cruder forms give way to higher. All Christian missionaries, for instance, say that they can make far greater progress among aboriginal tribes which hold by some fetich than is possible among the adherents of the well-established

ethnic religions, such as Brahmanism or Mohammedanism. Religious beliefs are thus common to mankind ; and the more clearly these are defined, apprehended, and held, the stronger and the more extensively spread are the religions which give them expression.

(*d*) But religion's extension and influence are conditioned by another important factor. The kind of morals which are inculcated and enforced goes a very long way in determining the character and sway of any given religion. One not strong on the moral side can make little progress in any real sense of that term. It cannot make for a high civilisation. Like Mohammedanism, it may extend its borders by physical force and military power, but it cannot ethically and socially elevate its votaries.

A religion which is to survive and exercise a beneficent influence must have high ethics. Otherwise it cannot command the assent of intelligent men ; for, in the last resort, these ask, How does religion tell upon life ? How does it help people to live better lives ? And, How does it support and direct them in great crises as well as in petty troubles ? These are the final tests of religion ; and the replies given to these questions are the answering echoes of the nature and character of the religion professed.

IV

From what has been stated it must now be manifest that the universality of religion is beyond all dispute. The chief features of the great religions of the world have been briefly indicated. All have been examined except those of Christianity, which will later receive a detailed treatment. But meantime it may be legitimately said that underlying and partially explaining all that is distinctive of primitive and ethnic religions there exists and persists the religious spirit itself. Its claims are felt everywhere as imperative, urgent, and paramount. They are also recognised and responded to in all ages. These

claims, thus experienced and expressed, abundantly confirm the universality of religion.

Man cannot deny his religious instincts without doing himself a grave injustice. His religious nature cries out for satisfaction. This is a world-wide experience, and it explains the readiness with which people respond to the demands of the religious teacher whenever he seems to speak with authority, or to promise them deliverance from the deeper ills of life. Many other objects may legitimately claim their attention, but religion comes first and is of supreme interest. History witnesses to the sufferings that have been endured and the dangers which have been dared on behalf of religion. No sacrifices are counted too great by the fervently religious; no price is too high for them to pay if their desires and aspirations are satisfied. Thus not only is religion universal, but its claims are also acknowledged by men of all lands and times as universally insistent.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND ITS TREATMENT

I

RELIGION, as shown in the preceding chapter, has from the earliest times engrossed the attention of many earnest minds. Men in presence of life's mysteries and potentialities have pondered long and thoughtfully over it. In almost every age writers have given to the world the results of their investigations and reflections. It may, therefore, be legitimately concluded that the innumerable endeavours which have been made to interpret religion and enforce its claims offer indubitable evidence of the permanent interest which belongs to religion.

Another inference may, however, be drawn from the results of this universal quest. It may be argued that since so much has been written respecting religion and its claims nothing really new can now be adduced. This may seem a legitimate deduction, but it is not conclusive; for every age has its own religious problems which call for solution. Each is also obliged to attempt an answer to these questions in its own way. Besides, these questions colour and powerfully influence the life of to-day, modifying or enlarging its expression, and telling upon culture and politics, commerce and philanthropy. Human life in all its phases and pursuits is, indeed, largely determined by their treatment, and by the answers given to them.

Accordingly a restatement of the essentials of religion is from time to time a necessity. It is here attempted with the object of bringing into prominence, first, the

content and implications of religion, and next the value of the contribution which religion makes towards the solution of moral and social problems that to-day demand the attention both of the individual and of society.

II

But a word of explanation is necessary. No attempt is here made to offer a Philosophy of Religion, for such an attempt would involve a review of the contribution which metaphysics and psychology, ethics and economics, make towards the understanding of human life. It would also necessitate an examination as to what is true not only in religious, but likewise in all experience. In addition, it would require an investigation of theories of knowledge, and of those views of life which science presents and economists emphasise.

Religion does not embrace all that lies within these wide fields; but it should be noted that its right and adequate treatment excludes indifference to the teachings of philosophy, or science, or economics. One cannot disregard the results of philosophic inquiry, just as one cannot entirely overlook those of scientific research and economic practice, without robbing religion of much that confirms its claims. Religion opens wide its doors for the entrance of all that is human and of permanent worth. It takes into its service all values, and by a right employment of them makes for a wide view of life, and also for culture.

Such a treatment of the essentials of religion as will reflect what is best in modern thought is here proposed. An endeavour is made to give to the subject such a setting as will admit light from all quarters. Ample use will be made of what has been written by representative writers, while at the same time it will be indicated where they seem to assume too much, or to offer theories of life not supported by that deeper religious experience which is true for all times.

The claim which is made on behalf of religion is that

it is essentially reasonable; and the underlying postulate is that, if justice be done to it, there is that found in the religious life which satisfies the deepest human desires, and makes for the most useful service. The earnest-minded to-day ask for a religion which appeals to their reason, and wins their mind's assent. Perplexed by the mysteries and grave practical problems of life, they anxiously cast their eyes about for a solution of them. It is here claimed that the Christian religion, rightly understood, answers their eager inquiries; for in relation to what is most essential in the Christian Faith the claim is made by St. Paul that it is altogether worthy of credence (1 Tim. i. 15). It appeals to one's reason, and finds a ready response. A non-intellectual religion cannot survive the emotions which called it into existence; it has no future.

Religion, however, must not be identified with intellectualism just as it cannot be restricted, as Kant tried to confine it, to moral obligations discharged as Divine Commands.[1] Nor, again, must religion be made one and the same with *feeling*. Emotion plays an important part in the religious life, but it is only one of several factors, to each of which a definite place must be assigned, not, however, as in isolation the one from the other, but in a closely related unity.

This unity, indeed, deserves special attention. At a later stage it will be shown that a synthesis of the aspects or manifestations of personality—the cognitive, volitional, and emotional—is the need of the day, whether psychology, or ethics, or religion be the subject that is treated. The great defect which has marred the work of most students of mental and moral science has been their undue insistence upon one aspect of personality to the exclusion of the others. The treatment of religion bears marks of the same defect. Some, following Kant and Hegel, are all for intellectualism, while others, following Schleiermacher, are all for feeling, and insist upon all religious

[1] See p. 66 for Kant's definition of religion.

experience being brought to the touchstone of emotion. This is a mistake which must be avoided if religion is to receive right treatment.

The treatment which should be accorded to religion as a living force in life does not, however, necessitate a classification of religions. It would take one too far afield to give even a brief summary of what exponents of Comparative Religion have written. In the works of Max Müller and Tiele, which are easily accessible, almost all that can be stated on this subject has been said. It is perhaps enough to offer one reflection upon the many attempts which have been made to classify religions, and to point the lessons which such classifications bring into view: they all bear witness distinctly and clearly to religion as that which contains within itself a deep human interest, and which cannot be separated from life.

One further word of explanation only is requisite. Christianity is here legitimately taken as the highest, and the most perfect, expression of the religious life.[1] It is taken as such without any attempt at an apologetic argument. This, however, is not an arbitrary preference, nor is it a mere individual dictum; for almost all writers on Comparative Religion acknowledge, and, indeed, are forward to confess, that Christianity throws the clearest light upon the religious life; that it utters also the most authoritative word upon that life; and that it likewise shows how the religious life should be lived, and what is its supreme *end*.

III

There are, however, writers of great distinction who take a different view of the claims of Christianity.

[1] Ullmann, in his *Das Wesen des Christenthums* (p. 68), says that "Christianity is the religion which in the person of its Founder actually realises that union of man with God which every other religion has striven after, but none attained"; and Luthardt affirms that "Heathenism was the seeking religion; Judaism the hoping religion: Christianity is the reality of what Heathenism sought and Judaism hoped for" (op. cit., p. 20).

Nietzsche and Maeterlinck are modern representatives of the opponents of the Christian Faith. Both reject its saving message and its high ethics. Nietzsche, on the one hand, holds that Christianity produces, and multiplies, a poor type of men. Its morality, he says, is degrading, and is fit only for slaves, for the weak and the ignoble. He therefore discards it, and gives to it the name of "slave morality." [1] Maeterlinck, on the other hand, maintains that the Christian religion is rapidly decaying. In a notable article in the *Fortnightly Review* [2] he details for the benefit of English readers his opinion of Christianity. "Multitudes," he says, "are forsaking the religious temple within which for twenty centuries men and women have worshipped, and are now going nowhere."

These two writers represent relatively few thinkers. The great majority of those who have given a thoughtful study to religion place the Christian Faith first among the religions which have influenced mankind, and have imparted to human life a new meaning. Many of them are men with fine insight. Their testimony respecting Christianity, therefore, carries with it a definite value.

The great European war, which devastated many lands and brought untold ruin in its train, illustrated the character and worth of Nietzsche's moral teachings. His praise of the strong and ruthless, and his contempt for the weak and defenceless, received baleful embodiment in the unspeakably cruel deeds of Germany's war-lords. It ought, however, to be recalled, in justice to Nietzsche, that though he held morals to be nothing other than "a means of acquiring power," and defended "appropriation, injury, and conquest of the weak," [3] he was among the first to reject *Kultur* as that term is now understood. He, indeed, unmasked Kultur's "harsh features, and insolent temper, its narrow provincialism and vulgar pretensions"; but to the end of his life he remained the

[1] See *Thus Spoke Zarathushtra*, p. 91.
[2] January 1906.
[3] See *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 226.

avowed apostle of power. To-day, outside Germany, all Europe, and indeed the entire civilised world, reject his moral teachings. They are discredited beyond resuscitation. As for Maeterlinck's ethics from which he eliminates self-sacrifice, and holds that "we are no longer lowly in heart and poor in spirit," his own Belgians, small in numbers and limited as to material resources, displayed during the Great War a splendid heroism before an admiring world. Their heroism can only be accounted for—a man like M. Bergson being witness [1]—by the moral force which inspired them.

It cannot be too insistently affirmed that Christianity is neither on its spiritual nor on its moral side a spent force. It inculcates lowliness of mind. Its highest commendations are in favour of disinterested actions, and experience proves that the lowly and the selfless are the brave; for valorous deeds are the befitting expression of the spirit which animates them.

Christianity is thus its own justification. It imperatively requires from all who accept its saving message obedience to the highest ethics. It appeals to the individual, and points out the way along which one losing one's life saves it and self-realisation is attained. It has also a message for society burdened as it is to-day with a thousand ills; and society at the present time perhaps more than at any former period needs its enlightening influence and elevating power.

IV

In an adequate treatment of religion great care must, therefore, be taken to do justice equally to the individual and to the social message of the Christian Faith. Unfortunately many who profess it, limit, or try to limit, themselves to the individual aspect alone. The injury which they thus inflict upon their religion is very profound, while the loss which they themselves sustain from lack

[1] See p. 47.

of a fuller life is very great. Religion itself, too, loses its chief commendation when its social bearing is not recognised.

But these do not stand alone in doing injustice to the Christian Faith; for many social reformers openly and frankly discard religion and its aid. They are all for an interpretation of human life in terms of economics. Now, every informed person recognises that economics has its own legitimate functions which can only be neglected with distinct loss; but human life cannot be interpreted in terms of the material alone. The highest in man is spiritual, and craves for satisfaction. The Christian religion satisfies this craving, and does so because it takes one into the Divine Presence, and reveals God in His righteousness and love. It likewise ministers directly to personal needs, gives energy to collective endeavour and direction to social aspirations. Its contribution is altogether invaluable, and also essential to the development of man's life in its individual phases and social aspects.

Many, however, reject the Christian religion, since, as they conclude, it does not deal adequately with social life. There are, for instance, those like Miss Jane Ellen Harrison [1]—to take a present-day example, though Frances Newman and George Eliot might also be instanced—who have been brought up in the evangelical school and atmosphere, and have subsequently been repelled from the Christian religion by their own mistaken conception of its teachings. Miss Harrison, a highly educated woman, tells how she found the essence of religion in the ritual of primitive art and savage customs; and also how she turned away from the Christian religion, because of its assumed severe individualism and its too little insistence upon altruistic actions. She further states that she found satisfaction in M. Bergson's doctrine of intuition, and in the intenser social activities which, she maintains, that doctrine justifies.

[1] See *Alpha and Omega:* Essays by Jane Ellen Harrison, LL.D., D.Litt.

Miss Harrison, and those who adopt her attitude toward the Christian religion are, however, mistaken in assuming that Christianity does not give the fullest scope to social service. It is true that some put a narrow interpretation upon its teachings, and that this repels many earnest minds ; but such an interpretation is without justification, and should not be taken as representing the teachings of Christianity.

The Christian religion inculcates the widest sympathies and the most catholic activities. Its comprehensiveness is, indeed, one of its distinctive characteristics. This, however, is often ignored. An intensive personal piety is counted enough, and social obligations are neglected. But the Christian religion does not countenance such neglect. It lays specifically upon all its adherents the duty of cultivating personal devotion, and also a spirit of brotherliness. No more urgent task, indeed, lies to the hands of those who profess it than that of taking care of their personal life, and at the same time of throwing themselves with enthusiasm into every effort which aims at improving social relationships and making society itself strong and healthy.

Christianity thus recognises fully the claims both of the individual and of society. It does this in an altogether rational manner ; for, in appealing to the individual and urging its message upon society, it takes account of the present-day conditions under which life is lived, the atmosphere that is breathed, the doubt and uncertainty born of recent investigations in all departments of human activity. It gives a place to these factors, and also to the whole set of political and economic, philosophic and social questions which to-day loom on man's horizon. The right treatment of the Christian religion, indeed, necessitates an account of all that is human ; and both individualists and collectivists will find, when such a treatment is attempted, much that enlists their sympathies and provides ample scope for their activities.

It must, however, be confessed that in addition to the

difficulties created by those who see little or nothing of the social in Christianity, there are other barriers which lie in the path of an adequate treatment of religion. Objections, for instance, raised by a naturalistic interpretation of the world, and which carry with them a denial of the existence of God, His moral government, and His redemptive Purpose in human life, are persistently urged.

But, given a belief that God is, and rules, religion encounters further opposition to its sway when it is brought face to face with the baffling problems of daily life, and with the perplexities raised by philosophy. These present issues which are intensely practical. The merely speculative gives place to them ; and if opposition is to be removed they necessitate careful handling.

Equally serious, too, are the difficulties created when religion's functions are limited to the cultivation of devotional feeling alone. This limitation is placed upon religion by a certain type of men who seem to be afraid that their religious life will suffer if they apply the ethics of their Faith to business and daily affairs. The religious sphere is also restricted by many ethical writers and teachers who graciously allow that religion's aid may be enlisted in the teaching of morals. It must, however, they maintain, be rejected as the basis or as the authority of morals, and be strictly limited to creating the influence which comes from Church services and devotional exercises. Religion, in their view of its functions, has no larger sphere, and no greater contribution than this to offer towards the improvement of social relationships and the betterment of society. "State morality," whatever that term may connote in the minds of those who use it, or morality based upon experience and moulded by reflection, does all the rest, and religion is to a large extent set aside.

V

But notwithstanding these difficulties which lie in the way of an adequate treatment of religion, there is ample

justification for maintaining that religion rightly claims the whole human life as its sphere; that nothing which affects man's welfare and well-being can be foreign to it, or be safely neglected; and that religion demands a broad and impartial treatment. For religion is of all subjects the most comprehensive and vital. If any other subject be brought into competition with it—say science, or art, or literature, or commerce—only a little reflection is needed to enable one to perceive that religion touches and influences life more deeply than any of them. These other subjects are, indeed, of great value, and have an abiding human interest; but religion transcends them all by its far-reaching issues.

Were proof of this statement demanded, it would be found in the well-verified experience that in the breast of all men there is a conscious longing after God, which is at once the essence and "note" of religion. The classical illustration of this universal longing is the experience recorded when St. Paul encountered the cultured Athenians. In their classic city he had "found an altar with this inscription: *To An Unknown God*" (Acts xvii. 23–6); and when in the famous Areopagus he was invited by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers to explain the strange message which he had brought to their ears, he at once replied, "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you. The God that made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands as though He needed anything, seeing He Himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things," and "made of one every nation of men." St. Paul further told his hearers that God had manifested Himself both in nature and in providence and that He is "not far from each one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being."

The great Apostle then seized the occasion presented to him, and called Stoic and Epicurean to repentance, and to submission to Him who will judge the world in

righteousness; but he first, it should be observed, met their longings and answered their intense desire to know God.

The longing after God is universal; the desire to know Him prevails everywhere. The educated agnostic who speaks of the Great Unknowable, and yet refuses to admit His existence, bears witness to it. The strenuous endeavours of ancient and modern philosophy to find an explanation of life supply further evidence of it. The savage who crouches in his native wilds when the thunder's terrifying roar is heard, and the vivid lightning's flash is seen also gives proof of it. The intense longing of the human soul after God is at one time articulated, at another it exhausts itself in sighings which are far more expressive than words can ever be; but whether articulated or not, it is always present and cries out for satisfaction. This longing after God is, therefore, the one universal quest in presence of which all others pale, and are eclipsed. Nothing else touches life more profoundly.

On all sides, even at the present time, evidence accumulates as to the claims of religion, and the treatment which should be given to religion itself. Mr. H. G. Wells makes a notable contribution. In his work, *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, after describing the varied and painful experience of a man who watched with keen interest the sufferings and sacrifices entailed by the Great War, he reaches the conclusion: "Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God, and has been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honour. But all things fall into place, and life falls into place, only with God. Only with God. God, who fights through men against Blind Forces, and Night, and Non-existence; who is the end, who is the meaning. He is the only King. And before the coming of the true King this bloodstained rubbish of the ancient world will presently shrivel and pass—like paper thrust into a flame."

Thus, in Mr. Wells's judgment, religion carries with it the most vital issues; but his treatment of religion is only partial. He works, as even his greatest admirers admit, under certain disadvantages. His dogmatism where scientific data are at stake hampers him. His conception of God as non-omnipotent, and his tendency to become confused when dealing with moral distinctions, rob his treatment of religion of much of its value. He denies that morality is at the root of all things, and represents God as struggling to make a non-moral world moral, a contradiction in terms and philosophically indefensible. But while pointing out these misconceptions which Mr. Wells entertains, it should be acknowledged that his view of the Unseen contains a distinct testimony on behalf of religion. That, however, after which Mr. Wells strives is only found in full flower and fruit in the Christian Faith where God is ever spoken of as omnipotent and the eternal source of all goodness; as combating and overcoming evil through the Incarnation and the Cross; as offering man forgiveness through Christ, the Saviour of the world; and as always with man, imparting the grace which issues in victory and in life everlasting.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to deal with this, the final goal of the Christian Faith, but meantime enough has perhaps been said to demonstrate the persistent demands of religion and its claims for a right interpretation.

VI

Since such vital interest belongs to religion, it calls for delicate and constructive treatment. Too often religion is treated dogmatically and in the dogmatic spirit, but dogmatic pronouncements are out of place when one is searching for that which ministers to life. Dogmatics has its own place. So far as it attempts to systematise the truths of the Christian Faith it has had its own legitimate work to do. The study of the history of dogmatics is, indeed, instructive. Since the days of Origen, the

first of Christian writers who offered a systematic statement of the doctrines of the Church, there have been many exponents of dogmatics. Thomas Aquinas among the Schoolmen, Calvin in post-Reformation times, Dorner and Hodge in recent days, have given elaborate treatment to dogmatic theology.

Dogma does not necessarily affect practice, and its study may be prosecuted without affecting conduct. It may pass into a mere system of beliefs, or a creed which may be theoretically assented to, and yet have no influence upon life. Creeds are, indeed, but *defensive* documents; they express in systematic form the truths believed. That is their exclusive function, whereas religion makes for life. It moulds and determines thought, volition and feeling, word and action; and therefore demands a distinctively constructive treatment.

Again, religion must be distinguished from Apologetics, though this too has its own legitimate function; for there has never perhaps been a time in the history of the Christian Church when her Faith has not been assailed. Very early in the records of the Church a history is given of the labours of the Fathers, who living in times when the Faith was bitterly attacked, wrote in reply voluminous apologetic works. Since their time Christianity has been strenuously defended by many scholarly apologists. These have made the historicity of the Scriptures, the external and internal evidence in favour of the Christian Faith, their theme; and not a few of them have rendered invaluable service.

But it is still a moot point as to what extent the apologist of Christianity serves the higher interests of religion. His is an exceptional position. He stands on the frontier defending the Faith; but, as experience only too frequently proves, he sometimes through the stress of assault, or in his effort to be quite fair to his opponents, makes unnecessary concessions which have the effect either of weakening his cause or, at least, of giving needless anxiety to weaker believers. In his very zeal he

not infrequently, too, excites opposition which he cannot always allay. He may, indeed, raise more doubts than he himself can solve, and perhaps also, as Pitt said of Butler's *Analogy*, make more sceptics than believers.

VII

It is not too much to say that religion needs no apology ; for religion is inseparable from human life, and finds the seat of its authority in man's conscious relation to God and to his fellow-men. Religion is the expression in thought, feeling, and action of this consciousness ; and it demands not so much apologetic as constructive treatment.

Such treatment is the strictly scientific method. It takes accurate account of all that history teaches, and also of all that lies within experience. When it is faithfully followed, the inquirer after truth and reality enjoys a distinct advantage. He stands in presence of the facts of life, its great crises and petty cares. He is taught how to encounter life's trials most successfully, and how he can use all that is bright and useful in life with the greatest benefit to his fellow-men, and thereby to himself.

In the brief statement which has just been made the limits are indicated within which it is purposed to attempt a treatment of the essentials of religion. All questions, intellectual and economic, will be made subservient to the one issue : how religion tells upon and influences life. For religion's supreme function is to make the individual life more and more winsome, and society more and more perfect. The motives which it brings into play, and the end which it has in view deeply touch and mould human life ; but it always deals with human life as the agency through which God is ever giving a fuller and fuller revelation of Himself, and is displaying the glory of His wisdom and righteousness, His love and mercy.

CHAPTER III

RELIGION AND ITS BEARING ON LIFE

I

Since the right and adequate treatment of religion leads direct to the vast province of human life, its relation to and bearing upon life follows in natural order as a subject which claims attention. It has been rightly remarked of the modern mind that it adopts an attitude of tolerance towards that religion which bears directly upon daily actions, and determines them. Full justice, it must be repeated, is only done to religion when careful heed is paid to the individual, and when again his interests are merged in those of the community, the nation, and the race.

Religion in the first instance concerns the individual and his discharge of personal obligations. Reference has already been made to the individual and the social message of the Christian Faith; but there is an aspect of the reception which is given to this message that justifies, and indeed necessitates, special attention. There are, for instance, certain earnest social reformers who seem to act as if they left the individual out of account. Their insistence upon social service sometimes assumes the appearance of neglect of the individual; and those who have little or no sympathy with their motives and aims do not lose any occasion to call attention to their assumed neglect. No good, however, ever comes from recriminations; and now, fortunately, it is being recognised with a clearness which no one can misapprehend that religion appeals to, and deals with, the individual; but it is also

being made equally plain that the individual is not an end unto himself, and that a wider and fuller life is only possible to one when one takes into account and labours for the well-being of mankind.

If, first, some of the commonplaces of the Christian Faith be briefly stated, and next, the results of recent philosophic investigations, which have for their object the elucidation of religious and moral values, be examined, it will be seen that religion must bear upon, and must also vindicate itself by, the wholesome influence which it exerts on life.

It is matter of common knowledge and daily experience that men, free from the trammels of dogma, and attaching only a modified value to apologetics, ask first and chiefly, How does religion tell upon the individual life? Does it make the man who professes it more responsive to personal and civic duties? Does it also make him a better man at his own fireside? Is he likewise more reliable in business, more courteous in his dealing with his fellow-men, and does he earnestly try to attain to self-realisation by the cultivation of a broad sympathy, and a spirit of service? The answer returned to these questions, if even in any degree satisfactory, shows how religion operates in practical life, and makes men not only tolerant towards it, but also more responsive to its claims.

II

The Christian Faith, rightly understood, is all for life. It imparts *spirit*. It does not prescribe hard and fast regulations; it does not impose arbitrary rules of conduct. It appeals to *motive*. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. v. 14) is Paul's explanation of all that he attempted and accomplished. Conduct inspired by devotion to Christ is that which is expected from all His followers. The Christian Faith also reveals the supreme *end* of life. Man, it teaches, is redeemed by Christ in order that he may live to the greater glory of God.

These are commonplaces of the Christian Faith; but they are also of the weightiest significance. There is nothing to surpass them; and tested by their results they are at once the commendation and the imperatives of a true life. All who receive them must be "zealous of good works" (Titus ii. 14). It is also a commonplace to say that Christianity contemplates the spread of its own influence wherever men are, and that its great saving message and high ethical teachings transform and purify all human relationships. This message and these teachings bear upon the individual and the family, upon the State and international life.

The Christian Faith insists upon all these things; and it may be safely predicted that they who do full justice to the Gospel of the Kingdom of God as it thus tells upon life will be entitled to entertain the highest hopes as to the future of the race, and that even now they will hold the allegiance of the rising generation. For to-day there is a perfect passion for works as the only valid witness of one's faith.

The misuse which one large section of the Christian Church has made of works should not deter those who really understand Christianity and its implications from insisting upon them. For a long time fears were entertained that "good works" might be made a substitute for salvation by grace through faith; and the fears, it must be added, were not entirely without justification; for the Roman Church has always emphasised, and still insists upon, its doctrine of works which has this effect. But now, as in apostolic times, it is clearly perceived that good works have their own legitimate place and are essential. Without them, indeed, faith is dead; and they are, therefore, required at the hands of all who profess faith in Christ. Talk about piety without a lowly, reverent disposition, and generous deeds only excites legitimate derision. A passion even for a perfect system of truths, a faultless creed, is vain. These hollow professions do not count, but that which is of value is a

life inspired by a personal trust in Christ and devoted to selfless service. The religion which is the expression of this trust and service tells upon every relationship of life; and it is, again, a commonplace to say that justice is not done to the Christian Faith unless provision be made for its influence operating in every department of life.

It is the distinctive teaching of Christianity that the attitude which a person adopts towards Christ, and the reception which he gives to Christ's saving message and ethical precepts, determine the character and usefulness of the life he lives. The glad message which thrilled the hearts of men when first the Gospel of the Kingdom of God was proclaimed still requires to be repeated. It can never be safely overlooked that the Lord Jesus Christ still offers Himself as Saviour. Practical religion, indeed, begins with a personal trust in Him; it is developed according as those who accept Him as a personal Saviour abide in union with Him, deriving wisdom and power from Him; for without Him they can do nothing (John xv. 5), while through Him they can do all things (Phil. iv. 13).

This is the gospel of the grace of God in its elementary and also in its most practical aspects. It must never be forgotten, however, that while those who trust in Christ are in His Kingdom, they do not find their place in the Kingdom merely for safety, or enjoyment, or even for honour, though all these things are guaranteed to them. They are in it for service. Their election, rightly understood, is unto service; and they must personally put on the Christian graces which enable them to render service effectively.

But personal equipment is only the first necessity. Christian men and women must also count the wide world as their field of service. They must ever be on the side of justice, and contend against oppression, exploitation, and greed. They must also relieve the burdened, help the weary, and befriend the lonely. They must

always strive for harmonious relationships, and the reign of righteousness and love. Theirs is a great, but also a gracious task, and their religion is only justified according as they make an honest endeavour to discharge it.

Religion, as thus rightly understood, is altogether positive and practical. Emphasis must therefore be laid, not on the negative, but on the positive. Not defence, but insistence upon duty is imperative. Life as it daily unfolds itself, life with its crises and cares, with its light and gladness, is that upon which religion must be made to play, and give it character and an *end*.

III

This, however, does not imply that what is obsolete and useless should not be discarded. Destructive criticism has still its work to do, and every one who has insight into truth and reality recognises that good service has been rendered by enlightened criticism; for false fabrics have been erected round religion. Things altogether unessential have also been introduced into it; and subscription to these has been made the condition under which alone the religious life can be lived. All this is wrong and extremely hurtful; and even destructive criticism has, therefore, its own legitimate functions. The old Pharisaic practice of adding glosses to the Scriptures still persists in new forms to the present time, and not otherwise than by the application of intelligent criticism can it be rooted out.

But negation cannot satisfy anyone. Man longs for and demands the positive and practical. Far more valuable service is, therefore, rendered when the truths of the Christian Faith are related the one to the other, and exhibited in their unity. How they bear upon and influence life is, indeed, the positive task which lies to the hands of the exponent of the Christian religion. For life, its content and final goal, is of transcendent worth. It demands earnest thought; and experience, many

times repeated, shows that it is only enriched and made strong according as the wealth of a positive religion ministers to it. Religion and life are really inseparable. They are closely knit together. However the relationships between them may be explained, the claims of religion still persist; and religion still moulds character and affects life.

IV

The intimate relation of religion to life is at the present time widely recognised. It is, indeed, more intelligently apprehended to-day than at any preceding period. This is perhaps due to the thoughtful attention which has been directed to it, and the distinct place which is now given to its influence upon life. It was not always thus treated. When the French Revolution, at the close of the eighteenth century, shook society from its centre to its circumference, religion was separated from life, and had little influence on society. There were then accordingly many devotees of the goddess Reason who confidently predicted that religion, and especially the Christian religion, would a century later have a secondary place, or no place at all, in the hearts of men, and that Reason would reign and govern the world.

But history has falsified this positive prediction, and has shown both the short-sightedness and rashness of the prophets who made it. For, notwithstanding the defects of its adherents, the Christian religion not only survives, but is to-day the greatest moral force in society. Tens of thousands of simple-minded people fervently accept its great saving message; and when one turns from these to the representative thinkers of the present time one finds them engaged in an earnest attempt to crown their philosophy of life with an account of the religious life. This is a quite distinctive note of the writings of many leaders of thought to-day. It is a conspicuous witness of the close relation of religion to life. It is also evidence that man cannot dispense with

religion; and that religion, as our Lord illumined its content, and enforced its claims, cannot be separated from life.

This has been demonstrated many times, but never more clearly than to-day, for the awfully tragic events of the Great War showed that the brave men who fought for king and country needed all the sustaining power which the Christian religion imparts. These men were the last to think or say that religion is obsolete and out of date. They did not parade or speak much of religion, but they felt intensely their need of it; and their experience, of which they could not afford to be ashamed, was that as they faced dangers, and knew that at any moment they might be struck down, they listened with a new interest to the simple story of the Gospel. The testimony, too, of thousands at home, who waited in the agony of suspense for tidings of those dearer to them than even their own life, was that if the comforts of religion had not come to their aid despair would have been theirs. And in the case of those who heard of loved ones killed in battle, or subjected to horrid treatment by the ruthless enemy, nothing else, save the precious truths of the Faith, supported them, and enabled them to bear with noble heroism their great losses.

The present times are anything but common. Issues are at stake which are of supreme value. All that is vital and valuable in religion is being tested and tried. Its rich content is being brought into full view, and the character of its teachings displayed. The Great War was a contest for ideals and these ideals have without any exception their origin in the teachings of Christianity. The motives, too, which impelled men to make enormous sacrifices on behalf of these ideals and the strength which enabled them to pursue them came from the same source; for, the Christian religion has ever taught that nations, as well as individuals, have interests of which they cannot be robbed without injustice being done to them, and that all ruthlessness is wrong. It has also ever inculcated

obedience to the Right, and not to Might, while its fair name has ever depended upon those who profess it being just and honourable in the observance of promises, and generous in all their actions.

Thus, when the more common truths of the Gospel are even briefly stated, much evidence lies to hand that the Christian Faith bears directly upon life; that it speaks to man in every possible position in which he may be placed; and that it contains a power and inspiration which cannot be excelled.

V

But now if a reference be made to the investigations which are being conducted in the higher fields of philosophy,[1] a similar testimony will also be found that life must be treated in its practical aspects, and that the moral and religious are supreme. There is no more distinctive note of the labours of the thinkers of to-day than the diligent effort which is made by all of them to understand life, its content and implications. The late Professor James and M. Bergson, exponents of a new psychology, have treated mental states with a fine insight, but always with a view as to how life's obligations should be met and a worthy end be pursued.

Professor James, not satisfied with mental analysis, insisted again and again that the results of such analysis must be tested in actual life. Everything, he held, should be brought to the test of experience. This, he maintained, is necessary in order to ascertain if the thing tested has "a meaning" and is "workable." This is one of the redeeming elements in pragmatism which, however, when all that can be said in its favour has been stated, is only utilitarianism in a new dress.

M. Bergson is still prosecuting his study of the operations of the *élan de vie* which he postulates, and takes to be the explanation of all things, animate and inanimate.

[1] See p. 40.

But already it can be inferred from his published writings that in his deliberate judgment the moral is supreme. There are good reasons for holding that M. Bergson's theory of *instinct* has implications which seem to justify such diverse theories of moral life as those indicated by the terms "intuition," "idealism," and "pragmatism"; but he himself has not declared for any one moral theory. He is still working out his own great postulate of the *life-inrush*. His insistence, however, on the moral as that which explains values is quite distinctive of his own position, apart from any one school of moralists. Speaking on December 14, 1914, at the annual meeting of the Academy of the Moral and Economic Sciences in Paris, M. Bergson said that "Prussia had been militarised by its kings, and Germany militarised by Prussia; but suddenly moral forces revealed themselves as creative of material force, and the ideal of force had been triumphantly met by the force of the ideal."

Thus, the last word of a representative thinker of the present day is altogether to favour moral ideals and practical conduct. This is, therefore, confirmation of the contention that whatever theories or working formulæ are adopted, be they moral or religious, they must be related to life, and also be tested in daily life.

The position of Mr. Bradley, another representative thinker, is somewhat different from that of Professor James and M. Bergson. He takes life in its unity, and treats every phase of it in relation to that unity. He is the most trenchant critic of pragmatism; but in many parts of his writings he approximates to the position occupied by pragmatists, and even more insistently than they do he brings all theories and speculations to the test of experience. He, too, recognises the place of religion in life, and is another witness that the highest and best in man must be related to life.

Mr. Bradley defines his position in his recent work, *Essays on Truth and Reality*. In it he insists upon the unity of life, but also upon the rights of each aspect of

the concrete whole, the intellectual, the æsthetic, and the moral. In his treatment of these aspects he finds a justification for religion, and with great frankness says that religion is altogether reasonable, and is well supported even though psychology fails to lend it any aid. That is the definite conclusion to which he comes. The large view of life and its unity which he entertains is clearly stated and ably defended. "There is here," he says, "no mutilation of human nature, since every side of life, practical, æsthetic, and intellectual, is allowed its full value." [1]

Now, it should be recalled that religion, like philosophy, deals with values. Its intelligent exponent will submit them to a searching analysis; but he will be careful to give to each its own place, and will also remember that their respective and relative contributions can only be ascertained when the balance is equally held between their contending claims. Man, too, in the unity of his being and nature will also be kept well in view; for he who reflects and judges is the same man who feels and wills.

VI

The consideration of the questions that are thus raised may seem to take one far away from life, and also from what are the essentials of religion; but it is not really separated from either of them. For in the religious life, as so often happens in philosophy, too much stress may be placed upon intellectual values. When the philosopher over-emphasises intellect, he is in danger of adopting a severe unmodified idealism in ethics, and a repellent individualism in economics. When, again, the exponent of the religious life commits the same mistake, he runs the risk of reducing belief to the acceptance of a syllogism. This is, indeed, almost invariably done when belief is robbed of the glow and warmth of a personal trust. Exclude emotion, and you have a hard and cold intellectualism

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 132.

as the only note of religion. Intellectual values are, indeed, easily pushed to an extreme; and a cheap popularity may be gained by the rejection of everything which does not submit to Reason's tests. But give to instinct, feeling, and will their own place, and you at once correct this mistaken conception of what is essential in the religious life. It cannot, therefore, be too often repeated that intellectual values do not exhaust the content of either religion or life.

Æsthetic and moral values have also a rightful claim to recognition and to their own place. The beautiful and the good enter into life, and occupy a large part of it. They need neither defence nor commendation. One does not require to offer an argument on their behalf. They articulate themselves, and find a response in heart and will. Nature, for instance, in its order and harmony presents the beautiful which from the earliest days men have ever striven to express either in statue or on canvas. In human life, again, a representation may be given of the good; for a man of self-sacrificing disposition, generous in his actions, courteous in speech, and distinguished for his probity exhibits the morally beautiful, the good; and this ever evokes admiration and praise.

Æsthetic and moral values have, therefore, their claims which cannot be displaced by that of the intellect. Each has, indeed, its own qualities and functions. For purposes of analysis, or investigation they may be separated; but in actual life they play the one upon the other, and should, therefore, be treated in combination; for life is a profound unity.

Religion accordingly takes all values into its service. It opens wide the door to the vast provinces of life within which they may operate. For centuries philosophy and science have been eagerly searching for a satisfactory interpretation of life, and philosophy especially for an explanation of the moral life and its ideal. To-day the search is being prosecuted with greater zest than at any preceding period. Religion, gathering within its wide

sweep all values, answers the inquiry, and claims to be able to satisfy it; for it is distinctly related to all that pertains to human life, to motive, to conduct, and to an *end*, to human life, therefore, in the fullest sense of the term. And, since it influences that life by its own spirit, giving to it direction and aim, whoever watches the gracious power which it exerts, and the winsome deeds which it produces, finds in a close observation of its operations an interpretation of moral life and its ideal; and he also sees, after a survey of the practical effects of the application to life of the more common truths of the Christian Faith, and a review of the latest results of philosophic investigations, that religion is a necessity of man's nature, and that it is indissolubly related to life, and finds in life its true expression.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION AND ITS LIGHT ON LIFE'S RELATIONSHIPS

I

Since religion is closely related to life, and finds in it the sphere of its operations, life's relationships next claim consideration. These relationships are deeply rooted in human nature. A brief study of them will show how wide and persistent are the claims of religion, and also how religion itself can be rightly interpreted, since it plays upon, illumines, and refines them.

Now, whoever attempts to understand human life and its relationships at once becomes conscious that he stands in a definite relation to the world in which he lives. Next, he knows himself as personally related to the present social order. All the members of this order share with him a common nature; they are bound together by common ties; they have also common wants and aspirations. But, further, he is likewise alive to the truth that he stands in an intimate relation to God, on whom he is dependent and to whom he is responsible. He is, therefore, aware that he not only belongs to the social order of the day, but also to the spiritual order of the universe.

II

These relationships, it can be easily perceived, open a wide and an interesting field of investigation. When one gives oneself to reflection upon them, one is led far on the road to an intelligent apprehension of their content,

and to a right appreciation of their value. But when reflection takes to its aid the clear light of Revelation, and in that light reviews life's relationships, much greater progress is made towards both apprehension and appreciation. Life itself then becomes luminous, and its duties and privileges are made plain. As already stated, no apology is required for taking to one's aid all that Revelation teaches. It speaks in the clearest terms, and throws the fullest light upon life and life's relationships.

When investigation is thus conducted as to what these relationships are and imply, the truth which first of all attracts attention is that the world is the place in which man works out his life. There is much in the world which appeals to him. Its order and beauty evoke his admiration and praise; its very mysteries beget reverence. The daily tasks which lie to his hand engage his time and energies. The ever-varying conditions under which work is done necessitate forethought. His hopes and pursuits are, indeed, all coloured by the things of the world in which he lives.

The world, then, is man's abode, and he himself is the crown of creation. It is not the product of chance. A *Purpose* is stamped upon it; and one cannot easily resist the question, What is its import? Here, again, Revelation comes to one's aid; for, by accepting its teachings it is possible to hold intelligently that "the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3).

Still clearer light shines from the pages of Revelation across man's path. It shows clearly that the world is not only not the resultant of a fortuitous combination of atoms, but that it is not to be thought or spoken of as an end unto itself. Creation is but a stage in the development of the Divine Purpose. The world was made for man, and all things were placed under his dominion, but this was done that man, using wisely and rightly all things under his control, might become the medium and agent through whom the Most High would give an ever fuller

and fuller manifestation of Himself, of His power and wisdom, His goodness and love.

This view, often presented in Scripture, is a lofty conception of the cosmos. It exhibits creation as the historical starting-point in the development of the Divine Purpose, and subsequent events falling each into its own place in the evolution of that Purpose. All things are thus an ordered whole.

III

Now, man stands in a definite relation to the world. He is, indeed, conscious of being related to the universe, and can conceive himself as a part of the universal whole. As Thomas Traherne—a poet of fine insight, and who in these days is coming to his own as a poet who even excels George Herbert and Henry Vaughan—phrases it, man can be in contact with the eternal verities of the universe, "infinity and eternity the only great and sovereign things with which he converseth." But man, though capable of rising to the higher realm of thought, and attaining thereby to an exhilarating ecstasy, is in a special sense related to the world, and must find his interests in the common everyday affairs of life as well as in things that transcend sense. The world is, indeed, the sphere of his activities; and he may use, or he may abuse, material possessions. In the use which he makes of the world he tests the principles that guide his life. The material, it is true, is not the highest standard to which man's actions must conform; but it often plays a deciding part. The use made of possessions is, therefore, always a real test of character.

But man, trying to understand his relation to the world, is soon and painfully reminded that the world has been blighted by sin. St. Paul represents the whole creation as "groaning and travailing in pain, waiting for its redemption" (Rom. viii. 22). One does not require to adopt Manichæism, and hold that matter is evil, in order

to do justice to the grave fact that the misuse of the world brings the world itself under a blight, and carries with it an indelible curse upon those who wrongly employ possessions.

Another and more satisfactory explanation is possible, and one, too, which has the support of science as well as Revelation. It may be thus stated: man is the crown of creation, but that of which he is the head suffers from the effects of his infractions of moral law. For the unity of life extends to, and embraces, the material world. So closely, indeed, does the material lie to the moral, that the cosmic passes by almost imperceptible steps into the moral process, which soon becomes supreme.

This intimate relation of the material to the moral has engrossed the attention of exponents of science. Professor Huxley, in his *Romanes Lecture*, one of his last productions, discusses this question, and reaches the conclusion that "cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and evil tendencies of man may have come about." He sees social progress checking "the cosmic process at every step," and "the substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process." [1] M. Bergson treats the same subject, and finds in the operation of the *élan de vie* that which identifies the material with the mental and moral.[2] By his doctrine of perceptions he bridges the gulf between mind and matter, holding that "perception of matter and matter perceived" is "but a difference of degree and not of kind." [3]

Whatever reception may be accorded to these findings, this, at least, is made quite evident, that the relation of man to the world is far more intimate than is generally recognised. The moral is constantly reacting upon the material, and when man trespasses the moral law his misdeeds have such far-reaching reactions that even the material world is in some way affected. This is the key

[1] *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 33.
[2] *Creative Evolution*, pp. 179–191.
[3] *Matter and Memory*, p. 78.

to the explanation of an otherwise insoluble riddle. The unity which stamps creation and human life, therefore, puts a new interpretation upon the material world; and it also throws much light upon a judgment which has perplexed many, when to Adam it was said "cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. iii. 17).

As closely allied to what has just been stated, it should be recalled that in the Scriptures the same term is applied to the material and the moral world. *Cosmos*, the world, signifies the material creation as the appointed medium and scene of man's work (John i. 9, vi. 14; Rom. i. 8); but it also means mankind as alienated from God and using its own standards in estimating actions (1 Cor. i. 28, iv. 13), and in exercising a wisdom which does not recognise God (John i. 10; 1 Cor. i. 20, iii. 19); and the world in this sense is the object of Divine solicitude and love (John iii. 16–19; 1 John iv. 14).

The use of the same word to designate things apparently so different as the material world and mankind may seem to argue poverty of language on the part of New Testament writers, but, rightly apprehended, it is really a witness to the unity of creation of which man is the crown. For on his physical side man is related to the earth. "The Lord God," it is written, "formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen. ii. 7). "All are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Eccl. iii. 20). But man is also intimately related to the moral and spiritual; for God, who made him from the dust of the earth, also "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul": and when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, "the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

Thus, man is of the earth and related to the material world; but he is also of the spiritual world. He was made in the Divine image. That image has, however, been defaced by sin; and now man in his use of the world, and in the prosecution of earthly pursuits, may lose his soul in worldliness and be alienated from God. The term "world," therefore, rightly describes both the cosmos

and also that state of society in which man, misusing material possessions, may lose himself in them.

But there is another and a gracious possibility. The material world may be so used by man as to minister to his religious life. Nature appeals to him. The beauty of the fields, the grandeur of the sky, the mystery of the sea, and even material possessions, may be made of the highest service, and indeed they often are. The wonderful charm of nature, and the rich products of the earth appeal to man in a great variety of ways. The painter sees the beauty of nature, and tries to throw on his canvas pictures of nature idealised ; and thereby he ministers to spirit. The poet finds in nature's ever-changing moods luminous metaphors of moral truths. The devoutly religious, turning to nature, also discover in her treasures that which evokes both adoration and praise. The social reformer, again, sees in the earth's rich products that which can be used to alleviate the lot of the poor, and make for right economic conditions.

As proving what an intelligent view of the world yields, it may be recalled that there is nothing else in Scripture more frequently found than the fervent expressions of reverence, adoration, and praise that spring from the heart and fall from the lips of man as he stands, thoughtful and inquiring, in presence of nature's wonder. The Hebrew poet exclaims :—

> When I see Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
> The moon and stars which Thou hast ordained :
> What is mortal man that Thou art mindful of him,
> And the son of man that Thou carest for him !
> And hast made him a little less than divine,
> And crowned him with glory and honour.

The Most High is thus often addressed as the Maker of the heavens and the earth. Prayer, indeed, finds its element in conceptions of God as Creator. His greatness and majesty awe the worshipper, and produce a befitting frame of mind as he bows before God, the Creator of all things.

There was a time when Natural Theology was very popular. Witness the famous Bridgewater Treatises, founded by the Earl of Bridgewater, and which had as their subject "the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation." The Gifford Lectures of to-day, for which Lord Gifford left a sum of £80,000 "to promote, advance, teach, and diffuse the study of Natural Theology," bear testimony that this theme has still its attractions. The interests of religion, even apart from Revelation, have, indeed, a distinct value; but when these are examined in the light of the sacred writings they grow both in fascination and worth. Nature speaks of God and articulates His wisdom, power, and goodness. This fact has again and again been verified; it bears distinct witness to the possibility of the material universe ministering to the religious life.

References are often found in the Scriptures to the use which should be made of the world, and all that it yields. God spoke to Israel in terms of land. The Old Testament prophets were pre-eminently distinguished for their insistence upon the legitimate employment of possessions. The right use of these was, in their judgment, a clear indication of the spirit within man. The New Testament is all for men as stewards, who must use rightly and wisely whatever material possessions are at their command. All that man has of food and raiment comes directly or indirectly from the land. The world thus ministers to human needs; and man's relation to it is quite definite. To-day, perhaps more than at any preceding time, economics claims attention; but this is just to say in other words that man's relation to the world is becoming more and more clearly perceived.

IV

By a natural process one passes from man's relation to the world to his relation to his fellow-men; and here the reflection is obvious that if the essentials of religion come

into view when the world and material possessions are examined, much more are they emphasised when the ties which bind men together are investigated. Now a different, because a new, outlook is gained. Man, according to the teachings of the Christian Faith, is his brother's keeper, and finds in the relation in which he stands toward him both a wide field of service, and also, through service, of self-realisation. Christianity recognises no distinctions of race, or clime, or colour. God has "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26). Man everywhere shares with his fellow-men common endowments, mental and moral. Society itself rests not only on community of interests, but likewise on community of nature. Moral obligations, therefore, obtain everywhere, because of the close relation in which man stands to man.

Man's relation to his fellow-men can be described in a few words. The family is the original unit of society.[1] Domestic unity ministers to social unity, and domestic integrity to a strong, wholesome, social State. The obedient son is invariably a good citizen.

The family expands to the wider relationship expressed by the term "township" or "local community," and that again to the State in which political art plays its own important part, and makes for just laws, order, and freedom.

But the national leads to the international life in which commerce on a large scale is possible. Intellectual and scientific pursuits know no limits of race or place. Nor does the moral and spiritual life recognise them. The conditions of a fuller life are, indeed, provided when social and national interests broaden out and embrace all men and all human affairs.

Thus, in these few sentences is man's relation to man briefly stated; but the statement is sufficiently explicit. These relationships are, indeed, common truisms which are now accepted by almost every one. It should, however,

[1] See Mrs. Bosanquet's work, *The Family*.

be recalled to mind that a long and slow evolution took place before they were fully recognised, and that education had to do its needful work before they were acted upon. To the Greeks, a highly cultured people, for instance, man's relation to man was circumscribed. All men outside the State were to them barbarians. The Stoics, it is true, conceived a universal brotherhood of men; but their doctrine of dualism and belief in Fate excluded the possibility of its realisation. It was Christianity which laid the basis of such a brotherhood, and gave to it both motive and ideal.

The Incarnation of our Lord was the exaltation of humanity. He came as "Saviour of the world." The Gospel of His Kingdom was proclaimed to men of every race and land. It is a moral and spiritual force which has sent fresh streams through the channels of society, purifying them, and giving to humanity a new direction and a definite end. It binds man to man by strong, affectionate ties. It insists upon service from all to all, and that because common obligations and freedom to serve rest upon the relationship of man to man to which it gives its sacred sanction.

V

It is not necessary to elaborate this relationship, but one reasonably passes from it to man's relationship to God, surmised by ancient philosophy, and now illumined by Christianity. Man is not an absolute, but a dependent, being. He stands, therefore, in a relation of dependence upon, and responsibility to, God. But this relationship must also be viewed from the Divine side. God made man, and through him He both manifests Himself and evolves His Purpose. He consents, therefore, to stand in a personal relation to man. The Most High, the Supreme, is also supremely good, and as such is self-revealing. A non-self-manifesting God is inconceivable. God in splendid isolation is, indeed, unthinkable. His self-

manifestations justify the doctrine of plurality in unity, and give a basis for belief in the Trinity; but they also enable one to rationalise man's relation to God; for they show that the revelation which God has made of Himself through man, whom He created in His own image, necessarily implies personal relationship.

No single term can exhaust this relationship. Creator, Law-Giver, and Lord describe different aspects of it. These are familiar terms, and most people more or less clearly perceive their implications. Revelation especially throws its own light upon them, and all who consent to be guided by that light have definite ideas in their minds as to their meaning. They are often repeated in religious conversation, and the duties which they imply are well known.

Occasion will occur when a definition of religion is attempted to examine their content;[1] but as at this stage only the kind and character of the relationship itself are under consideration, the further question arises: Is God the Father of all men? or, Is sonship a privilege which is conferred through faith in Jesus Christ? Some years ago a keen controversy was carried on as to the Divine sonship of man.[2] It can, however, scarcely be said to have effected any definite results; for writers and preachers, perhaps without much reflection, still speak of the universal Fatherhood of God, and learned divines and illiterate evangelists still appeal to men to return to God, as their Father.

Some assume, without any argument or exact reference to Scripture, that God is the Father of all men; others, attempting an argument, lay stress upon the account of man's creation as given in Genesis, and quote in support of their belief the words of Malachi ii. 10: "Have we not all one Father?" the parable of the *Prodigal Son* (Luke xv. 11–32), and St. Paul's citation from the poem

[1] See p. 70.

[2] See *The Fatherhood of God*, by Principal Candlish, D.D., and *The Atonement*, by Professor Crawford, D.D.

of Aratus (Acts xvii. 28). It should be added that the universal Fatherhood of God is also maintained by those who say that there are two sonships, a common and a special sonship; and by those who hold that the term "sonship" is a metaphor, and is used not in a strict but loose sense, as, for instance, when Jabal is called "the father of such as dwell in tents."

Examine these contentions for a moment. First, it is held that man, being created in the Divine image, is the son of God. This, it should be observed, is merely an induction, and an argument can scarcely rest upon it unless sonship be elsewhere clearly taught in Scripture. The parable of the *Prodigal Son* cannot be cited as proof of Divine sonship. One may take the teachings of a parable as support of what is elsewhere clearly affirmed in Scripture; but it is a wise principle of interpretation, which all good exegetes observe, that nothing can be deduced from parabolic utterances by way of doctrine, unless the doctrine itself be found in other passages of Scripture.

St. Paul's quotation from Aratus cannot be taken as evidence of a universal Fatherhood, for when the Apostle cited the words of Aratus he was only controverting the pantheistic teachings of the Greek poets, and showing that they did not agree among themselves. He does not confirm, or deny, the poet's words. All that he attempts is to set Theism over against Pantheism. That was his chief object; and it is remarkable that nowhere in all his writings does St. Paul once even allude to a universal Fatherhood. The contention that there are two sonships, a lower and a higher, is supported by no evidence. Such sonship is unthinkable. Sonship does not admit of degrees. The theory of a lower and higher is only held by those who attempt to account for the effect of sin on man's relation to God, and at the same time try to find a place for sonship through faith in Jesus Christ. As for the argument that sonship is a mere metaphor, those who thus contend actually take away from the

term "sonship" all that it really connotes. The New Testament writers had definite ideas in their minds when they wrote of sonship. To them it was a high privilege conferred upon all who received Christ; and they valued it too highly to speak of it loosely.

The arguments in favour of a universal Fatherhood have been briefly stated. A dogmatic pronouncement upon this lofty subject cannot, however, be made; but it can be said that a careful exegesis of Scripture does not reveal convincing evidence of universal sonship. The arguments adduced by Professor D. S. Cairns,[1] one of the latest upholders of a universal Fatherhood, from our Lord's consciousness of His own Sonship, and from the light which, he holds, is thrown upon the subject by Christ's teachings, are far from conclusive; for they only prove that our Lord founded a new society, a society of believers in Himself, the members of which enjoy the privilege of sonship through faith in Him.

Since, then, a universal Fatherhood cannot on Scriptural grounds be affirmed, special prominence must be given to sonship through Christ our Lord. The references made to it are quite specific. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12). "Ye are all the children of God," says St. Paul, "by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26); and again, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

Thus, man becomes through a new creation what he was not before. He stands in a new relation to God, and it is the highest possible. The relationship is filial. It is one altogether worthy of, and in keeping with, the great redemptive work of Christ. It places man in a position of privilege, and gives to him an entirely new outlook. Duties are no longer imposed on legal grounds. It is no longer "Do this and live," but "Because you derive life from Christ and live through union with Him,

[1] *Christianity in the Modern World*, chap. ii. pp. 35 *et seq.*

therefore keep His commandments." Man is free; and when called to service the motive to render it is, "because of what you now are; because of what you have received, go forth and serve." Man, made a son of God through Jesus Christ, is thus no longer under hard and fast legal enactments, but under grace; and the strongest and purest motives impel him to do the deeds which make for the good of his fellow-men, and *ad majoram Dei*, the greater glory of God.

VI

It is a capital gain when life's relationships are clearly perceived. A clear view of them takes one beneath appearances to reality itself. It also makes the religious life intelligible, and wholly reasonable. One is not here dealing with mere phenomena, but with the essentials of religion. In clear perspective that which binds man to the world, to his fellow-men, and to God, is seen. That also which intimately touches life, appeals to moral values, and tells powerfully upon conduct and character, becomes also quite apparent.

Nor are the intellectual interests involved less valuable than those which are religious; for, when life's relationships are perceived, insight is gained as to the interpretation which should be given to religion, which is seen to be the discharging of all the duties and enjoying all the privileges which these relationships carry with them. And further, religion now appears and can be thought of as the resultant of the ideas which are entertained respecting the relation in which man stands to the world, to his fellow-men, and to God. Religion illumines these relationships. It gives to them a new atmosphere and a fresh vitality.

CHAPTER V

RELIGION AND ITS DEFINITION

I

A STUDY of life's relationships raises, as will be seen in a moment, the question, Can religion be defined? In the judgment of many, a sufficiently adequate definition of religion is given when it is said that "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. i. 27). Other passages of Scripture are often quoted in favour of this definition, such as "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow" (Isa. i. 16, 17).

It should, however, be observed that all these references are to the *kind* of religion which alone is genuine. The moral qualities which they commend are evidences of the purity and truth of the religion professed; but it cannot be claimed that they define religion. Something more is, therefore, needed. Fortunately materials lie to hand with the aid of which a definition of religion may, at least, be attempted. Thus, when the meaning of the term "religion" is ascertained, a certain amount of light is thrown upon the ideas which the term embodies and is intended to express. With this assistance a definition becomes to a certain extent possible.

II

The word "religion" has an interesting history, and when the record is carefully read its meaning becomes

more and more apparent. Cicero, in his *De Natura Deorum*, uses the term, and derives it from *relegere*,[1] to revise. To him it meant that devotional exercise in which one revolves in one's mind all that pertains to the gods. Lactantius, in his *Institutes*, gives to it a different derivation, and finds its root in *religare*, to bind. "We are bound," he says, "to God; hence the name *religion*."[2] The Hebrew word דָּת and the Greek term *θρησκεία* express the same idea of binding one to a duty, and carry with them a definite relationship.

The connotation of the term may, therefore, be understood as the performance by man of his duty to God and to his fellow-men; and a man may be counted religious who is faithful in the discharge of the duty thus defined. In this sense religion means that which "binds," and may be taken as nearly synonymous with such terms as "statute," "law," "obligation," "covenant," and "duty."

But next, as showing the limited extent to which one is aided when one makes an attempt to understand the idea or ideas which the word "religion" is assumed to embody and express, it should be recalled to mind that the term is seldom employed by early Christian writers. The word, indeed, is only used five times in the Scriptures. It is now often on the lips of religious people; but the sacred writers only employ it thrice to designate the duties imposed under the Mosaic economy, and twice to indicate the duties of justice and charity between man and man, as when it is said, "If any man thinketh himself to be religious, while he bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jas. i. 26).

The origin of the word, too, was for a long time a question of dispute; and that question is scarcely yet settled. Augustine used it in the sense of obligation. It had a place in the monastic vocabulary, but it came into general use only in the sixteenth century. Since that time it has occupied a prominent position in all Christian writings

[1] *De Natura Deorum*, ii. 28. [2] *Institutes*, iv. 28.

and speech; and it has been variously defined. In comparatively recent times it has received such definition as "the observance of the moral law as a Divine institute" by Kant; "faith in the moral order of the universe" by Fichte; "the union of the finite with the infinite" by Schelling; "the feeling of absolute dependence" by Schleiermacher; and "a mental faculty, which independent of, nay, in spite of sense and reason, enables man to apprehend the infinite under different names, and under varying disguises," by Max Müller.

But all these definitions are defective, and therefore inadequate. Religion, whether the derivation of the term given by Cicero or that advocated by Lactantius be taken, is concerned with life's relationships, and with the ideas which are entertained respecting these relationships. It takes special account of the manner in which the ideas entertained express themselves. It is also intimately related to the state of mind which it desiderates, to the exercises of will which it demands, to the feelings which it evokes, and to the words and actions which it dictates. Religion thus deals with all human relationships and affects the whole man, his intellect and will, his affections and moral nature. It is, therefore, only by examining its whole content and implications that its true meaning can be ascertained, and a definition may be possible.

But great care must be taken lest what has just been stated be misapprehended; for it is not for a moment to be inferred that one cannot live the religious life who is not conversant with the operations of mind, will, and heart. Far from that; for there are many intensely religious persons who are quite unable to make an analytical examination of their thoughts, volitions, and feelings, but who are none the less genuinely religious and altogether consistent in the profession which they make. But while guarding against this possible misapprehension it should at the same time be said that an accurate definition of religion is highly desirable. All who read and reflect not

unreasonably wish to know what are the exact limits within which religion operates and makes its legitimate influence felt.

III

In the light of what has already been stated the following definition of religion is offered: *Religion is the expression by thought, will, feeling, by word and action, of the ideas entertained respecting the relation in which man stands towards the world, his fellow-men, and God.*

Man's relation to the world and to his fellow-men has already been treated in some detail. According to the outlined plan [1] man's relation to God next calls for treatment. The thoughts that can be entertained as to this relation are by far the weightiest and loftiest which can find a place in the human mind. The fullest and richest inspiration also comes from them. A man's life, both as to character and action, is, indeed, determined by the thoughts of God which he has and cherishes.

This relationship, therefore, deserves special attention. Study of the engrossing subject which it presents may perhaps be most profitably conducted if the basis of the relationship be carefully examined, and next, if the names by which God has been graciously pleased to reveal Himself to man be considered; for if these two objects be achieved, the manner in which thoughts of God express themselves becomes at once a theme of fruitful reflection. Let it be remembered that all these things are here attempted with the view of ascertaining what may be legitimately adduced in favour of the definition of religion which has been offered.

Examine, then, the basis of the relation which subsists between God and man. The Most High is infinitely above, and altogether independent of man; but He has been pleased to reveal Himself, and to work out His redemptive Purpose to its goal through man. It is not irreverent to think and say that subtle lines of relation-

[1] See p. 60

ship go out from God and find their object in man. Man, on the other hand, is conscious of his personal identity. He knows himself as distinct from other persons. He is conscious of the thoughts and actions which are his own, and for which he is responsible. He recognises himself as dependent upon God and amenable to Him; and he is, therefore, aware of subtle lines of relationship going out from himself and finding their Object in God.

Here then are two persons, God and man. The tie which binds man to God is of the essence of religion. The relationship which thus subsists, and based thereon the quest of the soul going far beyond the limits of human personality and longing for God, the living God, constitute the most essential element in religion. In this earnest, passionate search the soul is persuaded that God alone can satisfy its deepest needs, and that it can find its true home in Him. This is religion, this longing, this yearning which thus expresses itself:

> Whom have I in the heaven but Thee?
> And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.
> My flesh and my heart faileth:
> But God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.
> (Ps. lxxiii. 25–6.)

The knowledge of this intimate relation of man to God is partly derived from what man is, and observes, but chiefly from Revelation. Reflection upon man's endowments, mental and moral, and a survey of his potentialities go a long way towards enabling one to ascertain man's relation to God. Man's intuitions are more than mere intimations and prophecies of his dependence upon God; they more or less distinctly articulate the relationship in which he stands to Him. Man's very being likewise implies the Being of God. The world, again, is witness to God who made all things; and man's place in it testifies to his relation to God, the Creator. The world, too, is full of evidences of Design; and whether an argument be conducted *from*, or, as is now more generally

done by the philosophy of the day, *to* the wonderful adaptation of means to ends, the result greatly adds to the accumulated witness of man's relation to God. A theology based upon the moral, ontological, cosmological, and teleological evidence thus produced teaches, as the history of Doctrine shows, man much respecting his dependence upon and responsibility to God.

But however valuable this evidence is, it is not enough. That which is most of all required is only found when the pages of Revelation are consulted; for then the light which is thrown upon man's relation to God is seen growing in ever-increasing distinctness until it flashes its rays with such brightness that the relationship itself is clearly seen. And it may be added that when this is done a definition of religion becomes more and more possible.

It is well worth the labour that may be entailed to attempt to trace the steady development of Revelation, and to watch the ever brighter and brighter light which it casts upon man's relation to God. In the rich volume of Revelation there is much to aid one who makes this double attempt. There are, indeed, many avenues of Bible history and religious experience along which one might travel and gather evidence by the way. But, as already indicated, if the names by means of which God has made Himself known be taken and carefully examined, the kind of witness that is most helpful will be easily obtained, and by its aid the relation of man to God will be more clearly perceived.

These names, it should be kept well in view, are witness of God and of man's relation to Him; but it should also be remembered that it is a witness which grows in ever clearer and clearer articulation as the ages run on. The revelation is progressive, from less to more like the dawning day, until God is fully known. But one thing further requires to be said: care must be taken to observe what such names actually connote; for it is only when such care is bestowed that the relation of man to God is fully apprehended.

Keeping, then, these things in mind, it is now possible to examine the meaning of the names by which God is known. The Hebrew word אֱלוֹהַּ (*eloha*) in its plural form אֱלֹהִים (*elohim*), the first name applied to God (Gen. i. 1), expresses the greatness and the might of God. He is the Almighty, and in His Presence man is constrained to bow reverently, confessing his dependence upon Him. Next, God made Himself known as Lord, Master, Owner (Gen. xviii. 27). This term describes man's relation to God as one which entails service. Then came the great revelation when God made Himself known as Jehovah (Exod. iii. 14), the Self-existent, the Immutable, the Eternal. This self-revealing word carries with it the idea that man owes his being and all that he possesses to God.

God also revealed Himself as Law-Giver and Judge, as the supreme Ruler and King. "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-Giver, the Lord is our King" (Isa. xxxiii. 22). To Him man is amenable for his actions; and this, therefore, further shows that man stands in a relation to God which necessitates loyal obedience.

Other names are applied to God, such as Refuge, Rock, Fortress, and Shepherd. By the use of these metaphors man's relation to God is exhibited as intimate, and his position one of safety. But the crowning revelation is that which made God known as Spirit, Light, and Love. We owe this revelation to our Lord Jesus Christ. "God," He said, "is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John iv. 24). There is no full record of the many private meetings, sometimes on the quiet hillside, and again in a friend's house in the large city, which Jesus held with His chosen Twelve. Nor are details given of all the instructions which He imparted to them. But the issues of His training of the Twelve are distinctly reflected in their writings; and from these it is seen that He so taught them that one of them in after-days could write "God is Light" and "God is Love" (1 John i. 5; iv. 8).

Reflection on these luminously revealing words leads to the conclusion that God is in His Being "Spirit," in His Character, "Light," and, loftiest of all thoughts that can be entertained of Him, He is in His Nature, Love.[1]

The Son of man gave a perfect revelation of God. No longer is search to be made for Him. He is known, and known in all the fulness of His being, His Character, and His Nature. His great, gracious Purpose relative to man is also made plain; and in the light which its gradual evolution sheds man sees more and more clearly his relation to God. Philosophy may still carry on its investigations, and in the domain of metaphysics the inquirer after the Absolute may still appear as one groping in the darkness; but if one stands in the Presence of Christ, and listens to His words as He reveals the Father, all uncertainty vanishes, and man's relation to God is clearly seen.

IV

The names applied to Christ Himself are a further revelation of this relationship. Each name represents a different aspect in which His Person and work are exhibited, and should be contemplated. For the names which He bears are all significant. They serve many purposes, among which that of revealing still more and more clearly man's relation to God is quite distinctive. The names themselves are familiar, but their very familiarity should not be allowed to obscure their vital bearing upon what Christ is, and reveals to those who desire to know God.

He is called the Word (John i. 1), the Saviour of the world (John iv. 42), Son of man (Matt. viii. 20), Mediator (1 Tim. ii. 5), High Priest (Heb. iii. 1), Head over all things to the Church (Eph. i. 22), Lord and Master (John xiii. 14). Metaphors are also employed by the New Testament writers to designate aspects of His redemptive work. Thus, He is described as Rock (1 Cor. x. 4), Root of David

[1] *Vide* Bishop Westcott's exposition of 1 John i. 5.

(Rev. v. 5), Shepherd (John x. 11), Captain of Salvation (Heb. ii. 10), and Lamb of God (John i. 29). The value of these names lies in this, that they show not only that man is related to God, but also that the relationship is of the most intimate and sacred kind. They speak of God, not as afar off, isolated from man, and indifferent to his well-being, but as very near, and as in Christ Jesus all that these significant names express to men and women everywhere who desire to know Him and serve Him.

While, therefore, the names which Christ bears show the close and sacred relationship of man to God, and leave no room for doubt or uncertainty as to that relationship, they must also be reverently and affectionately used as names which take you into the Presence of God. You see your standing before Him; it is one of privilege and honour; and as you try to grasp the full meaning of redemption there will enter into your mind the conviction that the power, wisdom, and love of God are all employed in the interests of your well-being, and of the service which in Christ's name and for His sake you may render. Less than this cannot be deduced from the names of Christ.

It should, however, be remembered that the New Testament writers do not deal to any extent with man's relation to God except as that relationship is determined by the acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour. There are, it is true, passages in their writings which are descriptive of man's relation to God apart from what Christ is to those who trust in Him; but this is not a common theme with them. Writing as they did to members of the Christian Church, they deal almost exclusively with the new relationship in which man stands to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The Incarnation and the Cross, with all that lay between them, in their view, transformed man's relation to God; and account must be taken of this fact, the greatest in human experience.

V

The same consideration must also be kept in mind when reference is made to the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit. For the names given to Him may be legitimately taken as throwing further light upon man's relation to God. It repays one to inquire into the meaning of these names. But while doing this it must also be remembered in what sense New Testament writers speak of the Holy Spirit and His work. He is called the Comforter sent by the Father in Christ's name to teach and instruct all believers (John xiv. 26), the Guide into all truth (John xvi. 13), the Witness and Seal (Eph. iv. 30, Heb. x. 15), to those who trust in Christ, and most frequently *the Holy Spirit* (Luke iii. 22, John xiv. 26, Acts ii. 4). The present age is the age of the Spirit now that Christ has gone away as He said He would go (John xvi. 7). The Spirit makes it His mission to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John xiv. 16, xvi. 9–11), and to educate and build up believers in their most holy Faith. All the terms by which the Holy Spirit is made known, while revealing His gracious work, are also descriptive of the relation in which redeemed men and women stand to God.

VI

Take now a glance backwards, and it will be seen that there is much to justify the definition of religion which has been offered. This will be still further justified when the way in which religion expresses itself is examined. The evidence gathered from the names of God, both as to man's relation to Him and how religion should be defined, is, indeed, voluminous and distinct. The names of God tell of His majesty and power, His sovereignty and holiness, His love and mercy. They indicate three great moments in the revelation which God has been pleased to give of Himself: God as *Power*, God as *Holiness*, and God as *Love*.

These great truths lie within man's experience ; for he, on reflection, knows himself as related to God, and also as dependent upon Him. All his hopes derive their vitality from, and cluster round Him. Man's life, and his loftiest ideals are due, and can be easily traced back to Him. Man finds in God his home and the Source of his self-realisation. The relation in which he thus stands to God, and his entire dependence upon Him, supply him with both motive and aim ; and the knowledge of God which he thus acquires expresses itself in thought, feeling, and action. The outcome is religion, which is the expression in this manner of the ideas entertained and cherished respecting man's relation to God.

If, then, what has already been stated as to man's relation to the world and to his fellow-men, and what has now been said respecting his relation to God, be kept well in view, it will be seen that there are good reasons for defining religion as the expression by thought, will, and feeling, by word and action, of the ideas entertained respecting man's relation to the world, his fellow-men, and God.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGION AND ITS EXPRESSIONS

I

The expressions of religion now logically and also appropriately fall to be examined; for if with the ideas in one's mind of one's relation to the world, man, and God, rein be given to reflection, the conclusion will at once be reached that these ideas must express themselves.

There are here more than mere concepts which deal only with the sum of the conditions under which things exist; there are ideas of God which are most real, and find a definite place in the mind. These ideas are of the very essence of religion; they are its basis and its elements, its life and atmosphere. They take one far beyond the phenomena and laws of nature; they, indeed, transport one into the unseen. They also enable one to transcend oneself as well as nature; and borne by them, as on the strong wings of a bird of lofty flight, into regions far beyond those of the natural eye, one can conceive human life as having ends superior to all natural forces, ends after which one aided by a Power higher than oneself, can strive, and on reaching which self-realisation is attained. This is religion both in presentation and in act.

Religion as thus understood has its own expressions in thought, feeling, and will or moral purpose, in worship, and service. It must, however, be remembered that these expressions of religion which mark steps and stages of its growth, should not be isolated the one from the other. They are only separable when made subjects of analysis. The unity of personality, and the fact that they are found

in human life coexisting with each other, necessitate a treatment of them as a whole. For just as many different colours are blended in a ray of light, so these act and react one upon the other, and make a unity which is the very soul of religion. How, then, do these ideas express themselves ?

Religion's Expression in Thought.

This is the first form. When ideas are entertained they cannot lie dormant in the mind. They act as a ferment, and must express themselves. They are possessions far too valuable, and also too active, to be stored away in recesses of the mind. Ideas excite ideas until vast masses of them are set in motion, like endless troops marching on parade. Whenever the mind's operations are carefully observed there is at once a consciousness of thought succeeding thought with amazing rapidity. The capacity of the mind to originate and send out thoughts is one of life's mysteries which philosophy, notwithstanding all its assiduous efforts, has not yet solved.

Now, the mind can make the Most High the Object of reverent thought. It can apprehend, though it cannot comprehend, Him ; and the fuller the mind is stored with well-arranged information about God, the clearer, as a rule, will be its apprehension of Him. The mind, indeed, must be informed, otherwise religion is impossible ; for the unknown cannot be worshipped. Hence the need for the study of nature, history, and especially Revelation. From these sources information is derived.

But mere learning which "dwells in minds replete with thoughts of other men," even though the learning be from the pages of Revelation, is not enough. Knowledge which dwells in minds attentive to their own thoughts is a necessity of the religious life. For the knowledge which ministers to that life is much more than information or intellectual perception ; it is knowledge illumined by insight ; it is the knowledge which comes from the experience of God working in and through one's life. This

knowledge verifies itself by enabling those who acquire it to meet successfully life's greatest crises, and also its petty worrying cares. From the very earliest times, of which any historical record is preserved, men noted for their religious life have endeavoured to give expression to it by quiet thought and reverent contemplation. Pythagoras, who lived in the sixth century B.C., founded a *retreat* for the cultivation of the perfect life. Cicero's definition of religion [1] implies that everything which pertains to God should be revolved in one's mind, and be made the subjects of thought. The higher class of Epicureans, who are, however, often misunderstood, found their greatest happiness, not in vulgar, sensuous pleasure, but in the contemplation of the beautiful and the good. Philo of Alexandria at the close of the first century developed a mystical theory, the chief note of which is that man by contemplation and communion with God becomes one with Him.

The monastic life, first introduced in Christian times by St. Anthony (*b.* 256), was judged to be the best means for cultivating religious thought. John Scotus Erigena, the first and one of the most prominent of the Schoolmen, declared for mystical union with God, and taught that this is attained through quiet reflection. Eckhart, at the close of the reign of Scholasticism, founded a new school of mystics, and emphasised the fact that religion finds its expression in thought. Jacob Boehme, who belongs to the transition period, was noted for his insistence upon contemplation on things of the Spirit as the condition of attaining to the perfect life. Spener, Tauler, and Bengel found their element in refined mystical thought; and the modern *retreat*, favoured by devout, religious men to-day, is the place whither they retire for reflection upon the highest things.

But devotional literature, not less than history, witnesses also to religion expressing itself in thought and contemplation. Many of the most highly appreciated

[1] See p. 65.

Psalms and hymns are almost exclusively occupied with thoughts of God, His power, His holiness, His mercy, and His wonderful workings. Devotion is the offspring of contemplation. Man loses himself in thoughts of God. He forgets the world, and its passing show. He bathes his spirit in the pure light which streams from the Divine Presence. Devotion, intense and real, is, therefore, the outcome. This, however, is far removed from cold intellectualism; but it is none the less the operation of the mind itself; it is religion expressing itself in thought.

Thus, evidence lies to hand of the persistence with which religion expresses itself in thought. If the ideas which the mind entertains of God be clear and definite, they operate by way of action and reaction. "As iron sharpeneth iron" the ideas which spring from the mind in turn quicken and illuminate it. They are the material of contemplation which issues in insight, and that again in fuller knowledge, and ever truer and truer devotion. This is religion in one of its most distinctive aspects.

Religion's Expression in Feeling.

The essence of religion is not fully indicated by desiderating a well-informed mind, or a cultivated intellect, or even knowledge in the fullest sense of that term. Feeling must also make its contribution to the religious life. For religion tells upon the heart; and the warmth and glow of the heart's affections must be called into play. These are essential to religion in the highest moments of its expression.

Feeling, however, is not inconsistent with knowledge. It is rather its necessary complement. A heartless religion is cold, formal, and without fruit. Intellect has its distinct limitations, and must enlist the service of the affections which kindle their glowing flame, and give warmth, energy, and enthusiasm to the religious life. One may hesitate to give to feeling the prominent place which is assigned to it by many present-day writers. Humanists,

for instance, like Dr. Schiller, who, though they have not yet convinced their opponents that their philosophy of life has "a meaning" and is "workable," insist that all knowledge must be tested by the practical ends which it serves, and the value of the feeling which it evokes. M. Bergson, whose postulate of an *élan de vie* still belongs to the category of brilliant surmises, is noted for the persistence with which he denies the validity of intellectualism. The intellect, he maintains, is strictly limited; instinct, feeling has the supreme place in life. Dr. McDougall, again, is all for instinct which is called into activity by definite emotions.[1]

Notwithstanding these overestimates of the functions of feeling, its distinctive place in the religious life must be recognised. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34). "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23). "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. x. 10). These are intimations too distinct to be overlooked; and they clearly show that the heart's emotions must play an important part in the religious life. They are evidence, if evidence be needed, that religion expresses itself in feeling.

But feeling must not be given an exclusive place. It has a strong tendency to run into mere sentiment when not restrained and guided by an informed mind. Zeal without knowledge is always dangerous. Many, indeed, mistake feeling for religion. Schleiermacher's pronouncement is well known. You designate, he says, what is most essential in religion when you single out feeling. But pass from the school of the philosopher to the Church service, and there you find many who exclusively estimate the value of that service by the feelings which it evokes. For them the devotional worship is devoid of value and interest unless their emotions be touched. They lay undue stress upon the feelings being roused; and if this does

[1] *Vide* a Symposium on *Instinct and Emotion*, edited by Dr. Wm. McDougall.

not happen they go away from the House of Prayer, saying "Ah me! I received no good to-day; my feelings were not once awakened."

There is, it must be admitted, much of truth in what these earnest worshippers consciously or subconsciously demand; but it needs to be carefully stated. They are right in looking for awakened emotions; but they are wrong when they take even all the wealth of the heart's affections as the exclusive test of religion. For feeling is an unsafe guide, and to rely upon impulse is often to be led astray. While, then, a definite place must be assigned to feeling in the religious life, and while it must also be taken as one of religion's expressions, it must not by any means be counted an infallible test and standard either of the religious life or of the actions which that life inspires.

Religion's Expression in Moral Purpose.

Religion requires for its fullest expression not only knowledge and feeling, but also moral actions and a moral end. It therefore makes a direct appeal to the will, the powers of which carry with them moral capacity and responsibility. The will is, indeed, the seat of moral purpose and the source of all moral activities. Almost every volition has a moral colouring.

Reverting for a moment to Christianity as the highest religion, and taking our Lord's treatment of the religious life, one sees plainly the important place which *will*, as the seat of moral purpose and the source of moral activities, holds. Christ appealed to the moral intuitions of His hearers, and when they rejected Him, He said, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life" (John v. 40). "A willing people" in the day of His power was the prophetic description of an ideal religious life (Ps. cx. 3). When the will is persuaded and responds to Christ's claim, religion flourishes, and a strong moral life is its witness.

Religion is inconceivable apart from morality. There must be obedience to the law of Right. Just actions and

kindly, generous deeds are necessities of the religious life. Where these are not found religion is like the fruitless tree. In the Christian religion the very strongest emphasis is laid upon conduct. Christians must be good men and women, otherwise their religion is vain. In the Scriptures references abound as to the necessity of upright and generous conduct. Our Lord gave great prominence to good works; and St. James, reflecting His teachings, wrote his Epistle in order to set out clearly the need for works, saying quite plainly that "faith without works is dead" (Jas. ii. 26). Luther, fearing that justification by faith might be endangered, described that Epistle as one of straw; but the Christian Church has ever laid emphasis upon moral purpose and actions. It has insisted upon morality, and ever called upon its members, though no longer under legal enactments but under grace, to prove by their actions that they give the most perfect obedience to the moral law.

But while religion requires for its expression a moral purpose and a high moral life, one must be on one's guard lest religion itself be misconceived. For religion is much more than morality. It insists upon good conduct, and requires zeal for good works; but it is much more than obedience to the law of Right. As it is more than knowledge and feeling, so also it is more than the will's volitions; it is, as the definition which has been here offered of it implies, the recognition on man's part of the relation in which he stands to God, and the taking of the great ideas which are entertained as to this relation and applying them to personal, national, and international life, to politics, business, and to all affairs which have a human interest. Thus thoughts of God, worthy of Him and of His redemptive Purpose, react upon life, and in their reaction purify and elevate it. This is religion in the truest sense of the term; and in this description of it the rightful place is given to an intelligent moral purpose as one of its expressions.

Religion's Expression in Worship.

When worthy thoughts of God are entertained, they have, as just stated, a wide sweep and bearing, but they also inevitably express themselves in worship. Two distinctive elements enter into all right worship. These are reverence and praise. When the Most High, to whom man stands in a personal relation, is thought of as Lord of heaven and earth, as sovereign and holy, reverence is at once evoked. If the ideas which these terms designate be clearly in one's mind, the reverence will be both intelligent and profound. Herein, indeed, consists the value of the Christian religion. God is no longer, according to its teachings, an Object of paralysing fear. He is known, and known in His greatness and majesty; and man, therefore, instinctively bows reverently before Him.

But worship also includes praise. This, too, is an instinctive expression; for, when God is apprehended as good and merciful, loving and gracious, praise rises spontaneously in the human heart. Religious experience, and the great hymns which religious people have sung in all ages and lands, witness to the spirit of praise as that which befits man when he really believes that God is good. Think of God as goodness itself, and as the eternal Source of all that is kindly, generous, forgiving, and helpful, and you cannot but praise Him. Here, indeed, the reflection is inevitable; for the more you are persuaded of God's goodness, the louder and clearer will be your songs of praise. Many people put no heart into their service of praise, chiefly because they have in their minds no definite idea of God's great kindness. They neglect a sacred privilege, and deny themselves of that which fills life with gladness.

There is another phase of religion's expression in worship. Worship should be, and indeed must be, public as well as private. It may be said at once that whoever understands his relation to God is under a moral necessity

to join in public worship. Few gifts that come from God's hand are meant for an exclusively private use. The great majority of them, which even the individual receives, are for service; and if a man be conscious of what these rich gifts mean, the public worship of God is no longer a matter of choice for him, or as something in which he may or may not elect to take a part. He knows himself as under an obligation which he willingly acknowledges, and the discharge of the duty becomes to him both a moral necessity and also a real pleasure.

Such worship lies within the experience of almost all Christian people; and that which St. Paul observed as true of his contemporaries holds good of them; they do not forsake the assembling of themselves together, but find in public worship both repose and refreshment. Many are the testimonies which have been given as to the value of a well-spent Sabbath, and the observance of public worship. Tens of thousands have borne witness to the strength which they have thereby derived, and which has fitted them to bear the burdens of the ensuing week of toil. There is nothing which one hears more frequently than this testimony; and if one turns to the poets, evidence abounds as to the service rendered by the Sabbath and the Sanctuary to body and mind, to society, and to the piety which makes for the right discharge of daily duties. George Herbert, the saintly rector of Bemerton, sings of the Sabbath as

> The couch of time, care's balm and bay!
> The weeks were dark but for Thy light!
> Thy torch doth show the way!

And Henry Vaughan, the Silurist, describes the Sabbath and the Sanctuary as

> Eternity in time; the steps by which
> We climb above all ages: lamps that light
> Man through his heap of dark days; and the rich
> And full redemption of the whole week's flight.

Religion's Expression in Service.

Recollect that religion finds its origin not only in man's relation to God, but also in his relation to his fellow-men, and the inference is at once drawn that it must express itself in service, personal and social. God reveals Himself in nature, in art, and in science ; and when the voices which these utter are heard He is found, not fully but in some measure. It is, however, when man seeks Him in the lives of his fellow-men that He is more perfectly known. Our Lord made this plain in His teachings. He taught that kindly deeds done in His Name, and for His sake were done unto Himself. It was with a definite reference to the hungry, the naked, and the imprisoned that He said " Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me " (Matt. xxv. 40). He Himself set the great example of service. He " went about doing good " (Acts x. 38) is the simple unadorned record of His wonderful life ; and ever since His time a new moral influence has been powerfully operating in society.

It is true that His teachings and example have often been forgotten, or deliberately set aside. But to-day a surprising change is taking place. Religious teachers, and especially religious Journals which only yesterday were alarmed when the application of Christ's teachings to social life was urged, are now eager advocates of this application. All such advocacy is hopeful, and tells of better days coming. It witnesses both to our Lord's teachings being better understood, and also to the growing appreciation of the intimate relation in which man stands to man, and of everything which this relation implies.

A treatment will be given to religion and social life in fuller detail at a later stage ; but here it may be said that in the Christian view of life men and women are elected to service, and that even election itself is best understood in terms of service. Service is, indeed, the

rule of the Christian life, and the world is the field in which it is rendered. Man is closely knit to man. A common nature, common wants and aspirations, and a common end unite man to man. The relation is thus not only intimate, but is also sacred, and its very character implies service. This truth is day by day growing clearer as an object on life's horizon. When a man really apprehends it, he himself is transformed, and he finds his element in doing good to his fellow-men. Religion, therefore, since it touches and powerfully affects all that is in man's life, must have *service* as one of its distinctive expressions.

II

When one reviews what has been stated, it is at once seen that religion has many expressions. One cannot, however, insist too much upon the need for treating these, not as separate from each other, but in their unity. They all spring from the same source, and when treated in their unity human life is seen to be fuller and more attractive than it appears when only one of its aspects is emphasised. Its deeper meaning is also brought out, and its end comes into view as that which is worthy to be sought, as that, too, which inspires patient suffering and noble endeavours towards self-betterment, and also towards the purification and elevation of society.

But it must be stated quite explicitly that human life has far too seldom received such treatment. Whether one turns to the philosopher, or the Churchman, or the social reformer, evidence all too painfully exists of exclusive views of life. Philosophers, for instance, in the past have written much respecting "faculties" of the mind, and have founded separate schools on nothing other than the distinctions which they themselves have made. Some have laid stress upon thought, others upon feeling, and others, again, upon will. Unless for purposes of analysis, this is needless and useless. You cannot deduce a philosophy of life from one aspect of it, however important

that aspect may be. But philosophers have insisted upon isolating life's manifestations with the result that confusion prevails. With an entirely inadequate psychology it is little wonder that they have been unable to discover a basis for morals, and an explanation of the religious life.

Churchmen, again, who are presumably interested in religion, its interpretation and sway, have made the same mistake. Some have been all for the cultivated mind; others have laid undue stress upon the emotions, and have made *feeling* the test of the religious life; while many have known nothing beyond a cold morality, entirely devoid of religious content, and without inspiration, or human interest.

Social reformers, likewise, so far as they have a philosophy of life, have far too often emphasised one factor. They have attempted an interpretation of history, and, indeed, a full explanation of human life itself, in terms of economics alone. They have taken account of no ethics, save what utility and the interests of the State dictate. They have relegated morals of a higher kind, and also religion, to a secondary place. Their teachings have, therefore, had one quite definite effect, which has evoked a not unjustified criticism, but which is explained quite adequately by their narrow interpretation of human life. The effect is, that whether they intend it or not, the spiritual order of the universe is left out of sight, and man's deepest needs, the needs of the spirit, are left unsatisfied. All this ensues from an attempt to interpret human life in terms of only one of the elements of that life.

Now, after a long lapse of time and much waste of energy, it is fortunately beginning to dawn on the minds of men that human life cannot be explained by any one of its manifestations or phases. It is, indeed, coming clearly within the vision of philosophers and Churchmen that a synthesis of thought, feeling, and will must be attempted, and that great harm is done when any one of these manifestations of personality is left out of account. Social reformers, too, are beginning to perceive

that society cannot be purified and elevated by economics alone, and that justice must be done to mental, moral, and spiritual values. But men move slowly from positions which they have long occupied ; and the cruder forms of belief, just because they rest upon a narrow basis and a one-sided interpretation of life, are perhaps the most difficult to abandon.

Religion, however, with its many expressions, which touch and affect human life in all its parts, enters as a solvent of crude beliefs and narrow views. It invites men to look within themselves, and also out upon the world in which they live. It presents to reverent thought and quiet contemplation the highest of all objects. God, His character, His Purpose, His operations, and man's relation to Him, are its lofty themes. It opens wide the doors of service, and introduces one to provinces within which projects of social betterment and actions which give effect to these projects are possibilities. It operates within the individual life, and moulds and elevates it, making it more useful and more winsome ; but it is also an effective and gracious power in civic and national life, inspiring and directing all preventive and ameliorative agencies where social evils abound. It thus gives a large and optimistic view of life. It shows how exceedingly rich human life is, and how very great are its potentialities. It covers the whole of human life, and nothing is foreign to it that is of human interest. When, therefore, religion and its many expressions are taken into account and carefully investigated, the right method of the interpretation of religion becomes apparent ; for no longer will attempts be made to interpret religion in terms of one of its elements, but with great practical benefits justice will be done to all its manifestations and phases.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGION AND ITS SUPREME DEMAND

I

BELIEF in God is the supreme demand of religion. It is this largely because such belief is a necessity of man's intellectual, moral, and religious nature. The philosopher and the exponent of physical science alike assume the existence of a Person or Power as a working hypothesis, otherwise they make small progress in their interpretation of life and nature. In like manner those who attempt an interpretation of the richer phenomena of religion must believe in God. Belief is for them essential, and also eminently reasonable; for the religious life, with all its implications, is left without interpretation and is devoid of meaning unless belief in God be entertained and cherished.

I am well aware that a great claim is made on behalf of religion when it is said that belief in God is thus necessary. But a moment's reflection will show on what grounds the claim rests. If the world and human life are not to continue perpetual and baffling riddles, man must postulate the existence of a Person or Power which will enable him not only to understand how the things which are came to be, but also how he can gain the victory over the world. Such a postulate is closely akin to an act of faith; but however designated, belief is a necessity; for there is no possibility of understanding the world and man's place in it unless first of all belief be called into exercise. Locke's well-known dictum will not hold good, that the searcher after truth must never entertain a belief with a greater degree of assurance than the proofs

it is built upon will warrant. For the subtle operations of the active mind, instinct, and moral intuitions lead one into provinces of truth and reality within which scanty evidence is as yet only gathered. Whenever man transcends himself and nature, not only quantitatively but also qualitatively, he is consciously in these provinces, and knows the truths within them as real.

This is illustrated on a lower plane; for belief is a necessity of the practical as well as of the speculative reason. The exponent of physical science, for instance, must in his investigations entertain certain beliefs as working hypotheses; he must do this even when for the moment proof of these beliefs is absent. If he hopes to make progress, he must, indeed, conform to the conditions under which some of the greatest advances of science have been made, and must adopt hypotheses. But this is just in other words to say that he must call belief into play even when proof is still wanting.

Take a long view of history, and it will likewise be seen that not only to the exponent of physical science, but also to the metaphysician, belief is a necessity. Your metaphysician is essentially a man of faith. This may appear paradoxical; but really the first act in his investigations is to postulate the existence of a Power or Person. Not otherwise can he make even a beginning either of his endeavours to explain things which are, or of his efforts to ascertain man's place in the world. His working theories are all based on belief. He cannot see beyond phenomena. He must, therefore, make his postulates; he must, indeed, proceed by faith. He may assume, with Anaximander, that all things are explained by the aid of belief in an infinite primal *substance*, which is without limit in space or time; or, with Heraclitus, that all things were originally in a state of flux, and that *fire* is the formative influence which accounts for their present form; or, he may find an explanation of the world by adopting a belief in the existence of atoms which Leucippus and Democritus postulated; or, if a

modern authority, like M. Bergson, be taken as a guide, he may believe in the existence of an *élan de vie*, an inrush of life, as that which explains all things ; or, adopting the purely theistic position, he may assume, with Ritschl, that belief in God is for man a necessity, since such belief alone enables him to explain moral life and also to gain the victory over the world.

But whatever is assumed in any of these instances is itself a witness to belief as an intellectual necessity ; and I take all the risks of being misunderstood, that may be entailed in the statement, when I say that whoever entertains such a belief is religious. To some this may appear a far too bold statement, while to others it may seem a very poor compliment to pay to religion. But examine the statement for a moment. A man makes a postulate ; he cherishes a belief which is for him an effective working principle ; but in doing this he at once passes beyond the material and appearances ; he is in the religious domain. His intellectual necessities have urged him on and towards certain beliefs, and the acceptance of these is also a response to the demands of religion. The religious life thus begun may be indistinct and shadowy ; and the man who entertains certain beliefs for practical working purposes may make no claim to be religious ; but none the less, since he deals with things unseen, and cherishes beliefs, he is religious ; and even his actions are witness both to the necessity and claims of religion.

No one who lives and thinks can discard religion. Its claims persist, and consciously or subconsciously response is made to them. Nor is there any man who has not some form of religion. Some make business their religion ; it engrosses all their thoughts and efforts. Others make politics their religion, which is treated in the same absorbing fashion. Some, again, declare for pleasure, while there are those who literally immolate themselves for social position. But no man is entirely without some form of worship. Christianity, the flower and fruit of

the highest religion, may be rejected. That, however, does not imply that those who refuse to receive its gracious message are without some object which is to them their religion.

The metaphysician's postulate may, therefore, be willingly conceded. He is face to face with life and its problems. Unless he be content to remain for ever baffled, he is under an intellectual necessity to make his assumptions. But as he watches the operations of his own mind, trying also to understand the world, its origin and purpose, he soon discovers himself in presence of what looks like impenetrable mysteries. He must, however, if possible, try to solve these mysteries; and the first step which he is obliged to take is that of postulating the existence of a Power, or Person, who is superior to, and the Author of all things. It is an altogether fascinating task to observe the mind's workings, and how belief necessarily emerges. Recent research has shown that you cannot say how far down in animal life consciousness obtains. Schopenhauer and Bergson have, indeed, traced it very far down; but both confess that its limits cannot be ascertained. Driesch's doctrine of entelechy is an attempt to account for the beginnings of life; he assumes a non-perceptual vital agency; and this granted, he finds its operations directing a chemico-physical process. The exponents of Driesch, however, are obliged in their effort to give completeness to his doctrine of the distinctness of realised existence to desiderate ultra-mechanical concepts; i.e. the mind capable of such concepts is taken into service, but even this leaves the problem of life unsolved, and forces the confession that the depths of consciousness cannot be fathomed.

In a similar way limitations are placed upon all efforts to discover what in the life and thought of man are the first manifestations of belief. But belief, like consciousness, soon becomes apparent; and whenever a working hypothesis, in terms of which one attempts to explain life, is adopted, religion at once comes into exercise. There

is, it is true, all the difference which language can indicate between religion of this indistinct kind and the full-orbed Christian religion; but even the Christian religion makes its beginning by insisting on the belief that "God is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). The writer of these words had his own metaphysics; and before he penned them he made the great postulate: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (Heb. xi. 3).

II

But if for the sake of satisfying his intellectual demands man entertains, and acts upon, certain beliefs, much more in the interests of his moral and spiritual nature is it necessary to believe in One who can be both trusted and obeyed. There is that in man which cries out for an interpretation of his moral life and the moral order of the universe. Man cannot rest satisfied without, at least, making an attempt to understand and rationalise them. He may, like the earlier metaphysicians of Greece see in nature, with its order and harmony, an intimation that similar order and harmony must obtain in the moral world. Thus guided, he may conclude, as the later Greek philosophers did, that wisdom and justice, manliness and self-control are the chief virtues of the moral life; and in reaching this conclusion he may also enjoy satisfaction.

Man's spiritual life likewise demands interpretation. In his sin-burdened and broken life there is that which impels him passionately to long for a Deliverer, and disposes him to believe in a great gracious redemptive Purpose in human life. The history of religion shows that there have been many anticipations of such a Purpose, and it also plainly tells that when the Purpose was first outlined many fervently cherished hopes for its speedy realisation. All this is, therefore, manifest witness to the deep wants

of man's spiritual nature, which give birth to the cry for God and an interpretation of the religious life.

Besides, man is ever conscious of a perpetual struggle between the claims of good and evil. These claims appeal to his mind, but especially to his affections, and in the realm where will is supreme they persistently strive for the victory. But man knows through a bitter experience that he is often powerless in presence of strong temptations, and that he stands in urgent need of the aid of a Power higher than his own. Whenever that aid is given and relied on, at that moment belief is exercised and religion in an intensified form is experienced.

Thus, in the interests of the intellectual, religious, and moral life belief in God is a necessity. It is an enormous gain when this is perceived. For an account can then be given of religion in its first and feeblest expressions as well as of its fullest and richest manifestations. Its stages, too, from less to more can be easily traced; and if one enters into the large field of Christian experience an interpretation is at once forthcoming of all that is distinctive of religion in its highest forms. For tens of thousands have been induced and inspired to live noble and useful lives because they have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as the Fulfiller and Interpreter of that great redemptive Purpose for which man in his deep need cries out. And it is not too much at this early stage of inquiry to say that the key is thus found of the Christian Church, her great message, her teachings, and the influence of these upon the individual and upon society.

III

But belief in God, with all its implications and developments, is to-day, as it has often been in the past, assailed, questioned, and rejected. All the advantage that comes from philosophy and science is taken into service in the present assault. Reasoned attacks are, therefore, made upon belief in God. The atmosphere of the day is charged

with questionings and doubts. Negation is, indeed, a note of the times, and the outlook of many is clouded and uncertain.

It is not said that religion is either unreasonable or impossible. Nor is it contended that man is without religious aspirations. Such negations belong to a past day; but now it is maintained that there is no necessity, even in the interests of religion, for believing in God; and it follows, of course, that everything essential to and distinctive of the Christian religion must be set aside. This is the form which the modern attack takes.

The situation of the day, created by persistent assaults upon belief in God, and coloured as it is with modern thought, demands attention. It would be idle to attempt to disregard these assaults. They are serious enough, though alarm inspired by the fear of the harm they may do is unjustified. It would, however, in any case be inexcusable not to weigh with care all that can be adduced in favour of religion without belief in God.

Examine briefly some of the more prominent attempts which have been made thus to interpret religion and the religious life without taking into account the need for belief in God. Schopenhauer, for instance, offers an interpretation of the world and moral life apart from belief in God. In his *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* he assumes certain *a priori* forms of time, space, causality. These forms are of the nature of intuitions, and in their terms all things material and moral are interpreted. Nietzsche, again, openly and frankly discards belief in God. According to his philosophy of life all moral values and distinctions are accounted for when love of power and "the will to power" are accepted as the only vital influences in life. "Dead," he exclaims, "are all the gods," [1] and the superman reigns and rules.[2]

M. Maeterlinck, while rejecting Christianity and refusing to acknowledge even its high ethics, gives prominence to man's spiritual nature. He holds that "the spiritual

[1] *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 226. [2] Ibid., p. 257.

road must remain intact," but he contends that it is not kept open by belief in God.[1] The operations of "mystic reason" and "superior instincts" are sufficient, in Maeterlinck's judgment, to account for and interpret the religious life. M. Bergson interprets all things animate and inanimate, moral and spiritual, in terms of a postulated Life-inrush; but he excludes the very idea of God, for his *élan de vie* has neither purpose nor *end*.[2] Pfleiderer and Hermann recognise the existence of God, and also the possibility of man holding communion with Him; but their negations rob their confession of faith of much of its value. Professor Eucken occupies a quite distinctive position. He reviews and criticises at great length all modern attempts to interpret the moral and religious life; but he himself definitely maintains that "religion can subsist without belief in a God."[3] Within recent years his writings have won much attention; and since he is perhaps more constructive than any of his contemporaries, his interpretation of the religious life deserves a more detailed statement.

Eucken professes to be intensely interested in spiritual experience and the spiritual world. His life has, indeed, been spent in trying to give what he terms "a new" interpretation of spiritual phenomena. He rightly insists that a philosophy of life which does not take the fullest account of the conditions under which man passes his days is abstract, subjective, and also defective. What he terms the *life-process* is, in his opinion, the unit of spiritual life and likewise of history. It is, he holds, the key to the explanation of truth and reality. Accordingly, he maintains that the unremitting effort to attain to spiritual existence is the supreme "note" of life, and issues in self-renewal. The activistic is ever crowned with self-realisation, and with spiritual vision, which, again, has open to its view all that is deepest and truest

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, January 1906.
[2] See *Creative Evolution*, p. 202, and *Time and Free Will*, p. 95.
[3] *The Truth of Religion*, p. 129.

in life. Conduct, according to Eucken, is action, rationalised, which can always give an accurate account of itself. But he does not overestimate the rationalising power; for intellect and intellectual reflection have neither flower nor fruit if taken alone. When, however, they are moulded and flushed, as the world is by the rising sun, by æsthetic emotion, and intensive action, then beauty and the inner harmony of things are seen. This, he says, is religion, religion without belief in God which is yet based on faith, but on a faith which, while preceding reason, takes reason into its service, if reason be something more than mere intellectualism.

It is difficult to perceive the valid basis of religion as Eucken explains it; and it is still more difficult to find adequate justification for it. Those, indeed, who most highly appreciate his writings are also among the foremost in pointing out his extraordinary postulates and remarkable omissions. He declines to be reckoned a pragmatist, but he is all for action as are the followers of James and Schiller. Through action, he says, man gains an entrance to the spiritual world. The operations of the Life-system and the vitalistic element explain not only the origin and development of "spiritual existence," but also of all life that is worth living. The activistic factor is, indeed, supreme, and personality is explained only in its terms. Cognition has its own place, but it adds little or nothing to the sum of man's knowledge of the spiritual world. Like Maeterlinck, who, despite his antagonism to the Christian religion, is an ardent advocate of the claims of man's spiritual nature, Eucken, while denying that belief in God is necessary, attempts to build up a spiritual world. It is a world, however, largely of his own creation. As already stated, he describes how entrance is gained to it. Conscious moral endeavour is the gate; it is also that which explains all things worth knowing, and is thus of the essence of religion as Eucken interprets it.

The assumptions which are thus made, and omissions of all that Revelation and philosophy offer towards an

interpretation of the religious life, are indeed remarkable. With such defects Eucken's interpretation of religion will not stand. Activism, so much bepraised, must be traced to some source. It is unthinkable as self-creative ; and the religion which is its resultant is certainly not more easily accepted than religion based upon the recognition of the existence of God.

Jean Marie Guyau, in his treatment of the moral life, also eliminates belief in God. Dr. Höffding places him in the same category with Nietzsche and Eucken. He belongs to the same group chiefly because, like other members of it, he has aspirations after the highest things, but is at the same time conscious that his needs are greater than his satisfactions.

Guyau is one of the most trenchant critics of theistic beliefs. From his earliest days the moral life had for him a strong fascination. He eagerly sought an explanation of it. For this purpose he familiarised himself with the teachings of ancient and modern moralists. In the end he deliberately rejected all theories of "self-preservation" and "association of ideas" as explanatory of the moral life. He looked forward to the future as a time without religion ; [1] and he insisted that morality is without obligation or sanction. How, then, does he account for the moral life? Like other thinkers, he has recourse to a postulate, the old and still persistent necessity of all investigators of life ; for he assumes morality to be contained in the fulness, the overflowing rush of life, in natural impulses to generosity, altruism, and self-sacrifice. The highest moral actions, he holds, are those done when a person freely and willingly incurs risks. Peril successfully encountered is life raised to sublimity. All this is very captivating, but it is not a reasoned theory of moral life, and its main postulate makes as big a demand on one's faith as that of Christianity. Guyau himself was conscious of the defects in his interpretation

[1] *Vide* his *L'Irreligion de l'Avenir*, his last and greatest production.

of life; and he says quite plainly that he found satisfaction in his dreams and illusions, which, he held, would one day become realities. But here the observation is pertinent, that dreams and illusions cannot be accepted as a basis of the moral life. This is only found in the great verities of the Christian religion. History being witness and experience the test, one is, indeed, altogether justified in holding by the Christian Faith as that which sets up the highest moral ideals, and contains the strongest motive to a good life.

IV

A few observations on the positions just described may be made.

(*a*) First, it is not for a moment argued here that there is not much which wins assent in all of these attempts to interpret the religious life apart from belief in God. The writings which embody them would not have had the vogue throughout all Europe which they have obtained were they devoid of truth. Besides, it is one's duty to do amplest justice to the earnest attempts which have been made to explain life.

(*b*) But, next, the reflection is inevitable, that when all that these writers have set out in lucid words, and attractive form is carefully weighed the question is legitimately asked, What is the outcome? Are their substitutes for belief in God more reasonable and more worthy of acceptance than such a belief? Tried by this test alone, their metaphysics and theories of life are not one whit easier of credence than is belief in God, as the great demand of religion. For to believe that He is, and has revealed His Purpose towards mankind, does not make a greater draft upon one's faith than to accept as true either Schopenhauer's irreducible forms and intuitions, or Nietzsche's "will to power," or Maeterlinck's "mystic reason" and "superior instincts," or Bergson's life-inrush which is without purpose and end, or

Eucken's life-process and life-system, or Guyau's natural impulses.

(*c*) Further, these writers are only united in their rejection of belief in God. When their contentions are set out against each other little or no agreement is found among them. They literally riddle with contradiction the theories of each other, and the air rings with their assertions and counter-assertions. Their interpretations of the world and human life are, indeed, so diverse that only confusion reigns. This is perhaps inevitable; for when men of keen intelligence discuss life's phenomena, difference of opinion always prevails, and opposing theories are urgently pressed. The more confident, too, each one is of his own position and arguments, the more he flouts those of others. Hence it happens that to-day you have the strongest possible statements made as to the unreasonableness of the Christian Faith, and as to the necessity of discarding belief in God. But such statements avail little. Despite them the human soul cries out for God. The quest is universal; and experience, a thousand times repeated, proves that when man interprets his life in the light of the teachings of Christ, and casts himself on the infinite mercy of God, not only is God made the supreme object of reverent belief, but man also enjoys peace and repose, and gains strength to fight life's battles successfully.

(*d*) But again, when the writings of those who reject belief in God are examined, the reflection is spontaneous, that nothing else is so comparatively easy as negative criticism. Denial is simple, and in no case is it attempted with greater facility than when one deals with religion and theories of life. All these writers are strong in criticism; but the position and constructive work of each of them is based on postulates not, I repeat, easier of acceptance than is belief in God. And if their assumptions be tested in actual life, it is soon discovered that, as working principles, they afford little aid to man who is obliged to bear life's burdens and encounter its trials.

The regrettable element here is not so much that their theories have little to commend them as that they give neither direction nor strength to those who accept them. The frail barque on which they and their followers go out to sea is without rudder or chart. Their work even so far as it is constructive leaves God out of account, and their persistent rejection of the supreme demand of religion explains their lack of light, direction, and strength. These are not mere assertions; they are fair comments on the results of negative criticism and of imperfect constructive work.

(*e*) But once more, a reference to the facts of the religious life proves that there is no possible substitute for belief in God. These facts lie in the life of the individual, the Church, and society. They demand an explanation. Some interpretation of them must be offered. They cannot be attributed to chance, or traced back to education. There is only one interpretation of them possible. The longings and aspirations, the intimations and prophecies, of the human heart cry out for God, and can only find satisfaction in Him. Psychology may fail to justify belief in God, and metaphysics to establish a relation of any kind between the Absolute and finite wills; but this is just to say that the limitations of man's finitude render an explanation beyond his reach. It is not an adequate justification for the rejection of belief in God, or for setting aside religion based on that belief. Man, though limited by his finitude, can yet transcend both nature and himself; he can enter into the higher region of spirit, and find his true element in it.

With this experience, which is all his own, he can, therefore, with as much right assume the existence of God, and believe in Him, as the exponent of physical science or philosophy is entitled to postulate the existence of a Power which enables him to explain all things. But he is entitled to go further; for, taking the evidence already adduced, the intimations of his moral nature and the clear predictions of his spiritual instincts, he can

believe both in God and in His great redemptive Purpose. Besides, in the evolution of human life, with its distinctly marked stages, innumerable events testify both to the essential reasonableness of belief in God, and to the legitimacy of the credence which has a great gracious Purpose as its object.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION AND ITS ATTESTATION

I

The knowledge of God, it may at once be said, is the attestation of religion. This can be easily proven; for, if belief in God be the first great demand which is made in the interests of the religious life, and if witness to this belief be made by the universality of religion, it must be inferred that religion itself will be most surely attested according as one grows in the knowledge of God.

The religious life is, indeed, developed in the measure in which God is known. It presents itself as strong and beautiful when it is illumined by that knowledge of God which is rooted in insight into His will, and is displayed through obedience to His commands. The exponents of the mental sciences, metaphysics, and psychology may fail to apprehend God, the Absolute; but the knowledge of Him is yet possible through experience.

It is true that all knowledge of God is necessarily relative. God is known through the works of His hands. Creation articulates His Presence, and Providence His goodness, but the fullest and richest knowledge of Him comes to those who strive to do His will. Experience is that through which He is known to them; for the testimony which it offers is that He graciously enters into special relationships with them. The knowledge of God which is thus acquired, though in its character relative, and in its extent limited, is yet real and true; and this knowledge, according as it grows in volume and in clearness, is the attestation of religion.

II

First of all, belief in God, as already shown, is essential, but it is only the first step. True, it must be continued throughout the whole religious life; for man lives daily by faith. It is, however, none the less also true that belief in God is only the first step; others must be taken. No one can rest satisfied with the mere exercise of belief. The belief must be operative; it must flower and bring forth fruit, otherwise it dies, or is, at best, but a bare, empty profession. Its legitimate goal is the fuller and fuller knowledge of God, which expresses itself in virtue and service.

Accordingly, in the New Testament, belief is never represented as standing alone. It is ever exhibited as attended by winsome moral qualities. There is also a well-marked progressive movement towards the possession of these qualities. "Add," says St. Peter, "to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge self-control; and to self-control patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Pet. i. 5–7). St. Paul represents faith as accompanied by "peace with God through our Lord Jesus," and that again by access to the Divine Presence, hope in the glory of God, patience, and experience (Rom. v. 1–4).

The issues of faith will be indicated at a later stage; but here reference is made to them merely to point out that belief comes first, and is only the beginning of the possession of many moral qualities which are one by one acquired. Upon belief in God, as a basis, a noble structure is erected; but that which crowns the erection is knowledge of God.

There is nothing higher than such knowledge. When rightly understood it is sure to carry with it all the Christian graces. Hence the significance which is attached to it. In His great Intercessory Prayer our Lord gives the utmost prominence to knowing God. "I have mani-

fested Thy Name." He made it His special mission to make God known; and as showing the infinite value which he set upon the final purpose of His mission, He identified the highest of all possessions to which man may attain, that of eternal life, with the knowledge of God. "This is life eternal," He says, "that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." Here He is not speaking of the way to obtain eternal life, but rather is authoritatively declaring that to know God is to have life eternal. A clear echo of His teachings is heard in St. John's words, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, *even* in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John v. 20). The knowledge of God of which St. John speaks is immediate and absolute; and reflecting quite plainly the teachings of his Master, he identifies it with eternal life.

If "the knowledge of God," as the attestation of religion, is to be anything like adequately treated, the content of the phrase must be closely examined; and further, a effort must be made to ascertain in what way the knowledge of God meets man's deepest needs, and enriches his life.

III

The knowledge of God is much more than mere intellectual attainments, or the sum of the holiest feeling. It is also far more than ascertaining certain facts about God, or truths which have their centre in Him. It is the knowledge which comes from personal experience of God's redeeming power, from insight into His Purpose and will, and from a personal response to His claims.

(*a*) It implies sympathy on man's part with all the gracious designs to which God is ever giving effect through the life of the individual and that of society. (*b*) It means obedience, which is always rewarded with a new vision of God, and greater freedom. So St. John teaches

when he writes, "In this we perceive that we have come to a knowledge of Him, if we observe His commandments" (1 John ii. 3). "If ye continue in My word," said the Master Himself, "then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 31–2). (*c*) It assumes pure affection from which comes a ready response to Christ's appeals, and this response in turn is the outward and visible evidence of the affection itself. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments"; "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John xiv. 15, 21).

Now, sympathy, obedience, and affection are gracious possibilities to man. They lie within his reach, and may enter into his personal experience. They can be realised at the moment, or as a result of a past experience can be recalled in the present. They are verities of the religious life as valid as anything which lies within man's consciousness; and whoever passes through the experience which they imply has come to a knowledge of God. He knows God, the all-righteous and the all-loving; he knows, too, that God is working out His gracious purposes, and is ever giving a fuller revelation of Himself.

To acquire knowledge of God thus evokes what is deepest and best in man; but at the same time it also presents to him that which satisfies the yearnings of his mind and the desires of his heart. It does even more; for it renders possible an interpretation of all that is morally excellent and beautiful in the religious life; and it may be taken with certainty as the source and spring of all kindliness, love, and unselfish actions. For to know God is to strive after conformity with Him. There is that in apprehending Him, and in having an insight into His character and will, which impels all who have a vision of God to be kindly, generous, and loving. You cannot really know Him and be discourteous and unkind, unjust and unloving. You cannot have fellowship with Him and give way to anger, resentment, and all uncharitableness.

The knowledge of God thus expresses itself in actions, which are the reflex of God's character and will. All that is just and kindly, good and true are its resultants. This knowledge goes on ever increasing in fulness, and in deeds corresponding to this fulness; but how? It makes for growth in the knowledge of God if one takes the words of Christ and gives to them the meaning which they naturally bear. Once He said to His disciples, "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv. 14). Thereby He gave a new view of the intimate relation in which His followers stand towards Him. "Fellowship with God" is not an empty phrase. Nor is it an experience reserved only for the more saintly. It is a gracious possibility for every man. Whoever personally trusts in God's mercy, and renders a personal obedience to Him can claim the privilege of friendship with God; and an increased knowledge of Him is friendship's tangible result.

"Ye are My friends," says Jesus; and since from His holy lips there never fell a word which had not a definite meaning, in this instance His gracious utterance conveys an invaluable truth. It is nothing less than this, that as an intimate friend stands towards a familiar friend so our Lord stands towards all who trust in and serve Him. Friendship is the key to the exclusive knowledge which one man has of another. There are no secrets between them; all is open, because the trust in each other is mutual and sincere. Loving action by the one towards the other is spontaneous, because the friendship is real, and is rooted in a perfect understanding of each other. Since the same principles obtain in the religious life, no higher attestation of religion can, therefore, be asked for than the knowledge of God which comes from friendship with God, and is the source of all the kindly actions which make life beautiful.

The practical value of this knowledge thus derived and bearing these results is very great. It is often rightly remarked that a person who is both just and generous,

absolutely fair in his dealings with his fellow-men, and also entirely unselfish, gives by far the best illustration and commendation of the religion which he professes. A winsome life is the most effective messenger of religion. But if the high character and conduct displayed be traced to their origin, they are found to be the resultants of the thoughts of God which are entertained. To know God as in His nature, Love, and in His character, Light, makes most effectively for the virtues which beautify one's life. These thoughts of God reflect themselves in kindly and generous actions; and the fuller the knowledge, the richer will be its expression in the life of the person who has acquired it. The knowledge of God thus expressing itself is, therefore, the attestation of religion.

IV

But given a correct interpretation of the content of the phrase "the knowledge of God," the question now arises, How does this knowledge meet man's deepest needs, make for a richer life, and thereby attest religion? This question is best treated historically. (*a*) One must go back again to belief in God, and observe how in the evolution of the religious life belief takes the definite substantive form of an ever-increasing knowledge of God. If this observation be made with care, it will at once be seen how man's deepest needs are answered, how his life is elevated, and how religion is attested. The belief that God *is*, for instance, passes sooner or later into the firm conviction that God is the supreme moral Governor of the universe, and that He is carrying out a great, gracious, and far-reaching Purpose through the lives of men of all generations. Browning's exclamation,

> God is in His heaven,
> All's right with the world,

expresses this conviction; for, it is the utterance of a man of keen philosophic insight who sounded the depths

of human experience, and was convinced that God is, and holds in His own hands the reins of the moral government of the world.

(*b*) But the next step is easy; for when the manifestations of God's mercy and grace are taken into account there is the amplest justification for entertaining and cherishing the further persuasion that God has not left man to himself, and to reap the fruit of his misdeeds. God has made Himself known as Redeemer, "mighty to save"; and evidence abounds on all sides that He is working out His gracious design which will ultimately reflect His power, His love, and His manifold wisdom "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 10, 11). Now, when this persuasion is deeply rooted in heart and mind, the conditions are provided the right use of which meets and answers a real human necessity. Man's deepest want is his need of God. "My soul," cries Israel's poet, "thirsteth"; but for what? For possessions, or place, or power? Or, for what is much higher, for a philosophy of life, a system of truths, a perfect creed? No; but for God, the living God in whom is summed up all perfection, and beyond whom thought cannot travel.

(*c*) But still making use of the historical method, one is justified in holding that this passionate quest of the soul for God, the living God, is answered by the Incarnation. Before Christ came, the clearest-sighted of the prophets apprehended God imperfectly, and the most eloquent of them spoke of Him and His Purpose in broken sentences. But Christ revealed the Father, and His will toward mankind. This fact is inscribed in large legible letters in the history of the Christian Church, and also in all Christian experience; and therefore, whenever religion and its attestation are spoken of, the utmost prominence must be given to it.

Ever since Christ lived His life on earth and His teachings became the possession of mankind, the world is quite different from what it was before His Advent. A great

transformation has taken place. A clearer light now shines across man's path. God is known, and access to Him is given through Jesus Christ to all men. But when it is said that Jesus revealed the Father, what is meant? Everything which Jesus showed Himself to be in spirit, in word, and in action is a revelation of the Father. The gracious manner in which He received the penitent, the patience with which He taught men who were slow of understanding, His kindness towards the undeserving, His tolerance, His sympathy, His solicitude for the moral and spiritual restoration of man, and His great sacrifice of Himself in order to effect that restoration, all speak of the Father, and are a revelation of Him. God is now, therefore, known. In the knowledge of Him man's deepest needs are satisfied, and religion is attested. Examine for a moment the further evidence of this truth.

(*d*) The long history of the human race and the chequered experience of men being one's guide, one is again and again brought up against the deep and unutterable needs of the soul. The hunger of the human soul is a thousand times attested by experience. In dealing with man's needs platitudes are entirely out of place. The needs are too real and too burdensome to be met and answered by commonplace things. Neither material possessions, nor theories, nor ritual can satisfy them. What are some of these deeper needs? Man has longings and aspirations; he is conscious of personal defects; there are times, too, in his experience when he has a humbling, overpowering sense of personal wrong-doing; he often also finds himself hampered by his past failures; he knows well that often both environment and heredity tell against his best efforts to do the right; and his outlook is not infrequently dark and uncertain. He cries for God, and often hears nothing but the echo of his own cry. With these needs, so many and so pressing, ever present to his mind, what is it that man most urgently requires? He must have One who is infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness as his Deliverer and Helper. A personal relation to a personal God, a per-

sonal trust in a personal Saviour, is of the very essence of religion. Nothing else and nothing less than this can satisfy him.

But if, again, experience be one's guide, one can point to the history of the Christian Church, and can therein find evidence the most convincing of the simple statement that whoever trusts in Christ and obeys Him has the Deliverer and Helper whom he needs. In all that Christ is and does for man the personal element is ever prominent. He brings him into a new personal relationship to God. He appeals to him for his trust and obedience from the platform of a personal love ; and when a response is made to His appeals faith itself wears the form and guise of personal relations. The faith, indeed, which wins the victory (1 John v. 4) is personal, and derives its saving power from a personal Saviour. Its object is Christ, and from His hands the gifts of His grace are given. These gifts enrich man's life, and carry with them an ever-increasing knowledge of God, which is the most valid and completest attestation of religion.

It is open to anyone who wills to attest his religion by conforming to the conditions which Christ imposes, and by accepting the gifts which He offers. For religion is attested by the very demands which Christ makes, and the response which is made to these demands. According to the laws which obtain within the Kingdom of God, as these have been explained by Christ Himself, a willing cordial response to His claims ensures an enriched life.

This is not an unverified statement. You can test it in a personal way. Your soul thirsts, you cast your eyes wistfully about for One who can satisfy, and enrich your life. Lo ! Jesus stands beside you. His gracious words break in upon your soul like the sound of sweet music. Listen to them ; they tell you that He can satisfy your earnest quest. " He that cometh to Me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst " (John vi. 35). He thus makes Himself known as One in whose power and love you can confide ; and since your

life lies within the sweep of His gracious Purpose, while He invites your trust, He also enriches you by giving that knowledge of Himself which is eternal life, and the true attestation of religion.

V

But Christ's demands must always be kept well in view ; for, when these are acceded to, the experience which accompanies compliance actually attests religion. Into this experience enter many things, but chiefly an ever-growing and fuller knowledge of God, and with such knowledge a greatly enriched life. He makes demands upon your *will*. He does not force it. He waits your consent. The truest freedom, He teaches, is only enjoyed when you submit your will to His all-perfect will (John viii. 31–2). He invites you to test His teachings, and promises that obedience to them will issue in freedom. He makes demands upon your *intellect*; your mind must give its assent to His claims. These are altogether such as Reason can approve, and when submitted to its judgment they are pronounced as credible, and also worthy of credence. Appealing to what is most distinctive in the Christian Faith, St. Paul affirms that the saying is altogether credible, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. There is, as the history of philosophy and religion shows, a danger of making too much of intellectualism, but this risk should not prevent one from doing full justice to intellectual conclusions. He makes demands upon your *heart*; for He consents to wait for your affection. He needs it in order to satisfy His own great love, and that you through loving Him may know Him. This is not a figure of speech. It is as real as anything in human life. But consider what it means. There is the possibility of your closing your heart against Christ, and of refusing to give Him your affection. That is the greatest insult that can be offered to Christ. In the common experience of men and women it is agony unspeakable

for one to give one's affection to another and to have it spurned. This is of all heart-pains the most acute, and most difficult to bear. Our Lord knew it. See Him in that crisis of His life when the crowds which had sung His praises, and would have made Him King, began to leave Him. What revelation of the real humanity of Jesus there is in the yearning pathos of His words when, turning to the Twelve, He asked, "Will ye also go away?" (John vi. 66–7). He still waits for the chief place in human hearts that His own great love may reign in them. He waits in order that He might be allowed to do the maximum of good to those who return His love, that He may be known, and that man may find the attestation of his religion in the knowledge of God. But Christ also makes demands upon your *conscience*. He must be obeyed. His word must be the final authority of conduct; and whoever renders Him obedience grows in grace and in knowledge of God. There is no royal road to that knowledge, save fidelity to Christ's commands. For He rests obedience and all His claims upon His own Person and word.

It is only, therefore, as all His demands are complied with, that man's life is enriched and perfected. And as his life thus grows larger and fuller with its clearer outlook and greater confidence, he finds lying to his hand abundant evidence of the reality of his religious life, and of religion itself. Religion is thus a vital power in his life; it is also a guide, and it presents an *end* to attain which is worthy his most strenuous efforts. To know God is, indeed, the *summum bonum* of human life; but to know Him is to love Him; to love Him is to serve Him, and to serve Him is to further the interests of His Kingdom. This is religion in theory and in act. Thus, the knowledge of God is the pure fountain whence all pure streams flow. It is the spring of all the graces which make life beautiful and useful. It is also pre-eminently and distinctively the attestation of religion.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGION AND ITS THEORY OF LIFE

I

If the knowledge of God be the attestation of religion, one is entitled, when that knowledge is acquired, to set out hopefully in search of an adequate working theory of life. Such a theory is, as will be seen in a moment, urgently required; for there is nothing else which one who tries to understand human life and its possible destiny more passionately desires than an interpretation of life, and principles which may be one's guide.

Now, sufficient evidence has already been adduced to warrant the inference that whoever attempts to understand life must construe it, not exclusively, but to a large extent in terms of religion. There are many other interests legitimate and worthy of attention. The economic and political, the scientific and artistic, directly touch and powerfully influence human life; but the pursuit of these interests is neither inconsistent with, nor unaffected by, the moral and spiritual. For human life is a unity. All things which belong to and mould it act and react upon each other. When, therefore, even the fullest account is taken of the material and all things that play upon life, there is still ample justification for maintaining that religion has its supreme claims, and that human life must be largely interpreted in its terms. Justice must, therefore, be done to the spiritual nature of man; it is paramount, and as such claims thoughtful attention.

Since then human life must be chiefly construed in terms of religion, and since Christianity is, in the judgment

of most students of Comparative Religion, the highest expression of the religious life, an interpretation and theory of life may be legitimately sought for in a synthesis of the truths which Christianity presents for man's acceptance. This, indeed, is that which it claims to be entitled to offer. It sets out in plain words its great truths. The exponent of theology takes these truths and constructs his science. Their high value and the clear light which they throw upon human life make theology, which relates them the one to the other and unifies them, the queen of the sciences. It deals with the highest truths and the deepest of human interests. Hence its claims. But whether the claims be granted or denied, this, at least, is true, that the theologian's first task is to systematise the truths of Revelation, to exhibit them in their unity, and thereby find a reasoned theory in terms of which he can give an explicit interpretation of religion and also of the meaning and end of life.

A working theory of life is a necessity. Such are the difficulties which man encounters when trying to penetrate life's mysteries, and such, too, is the constitution of his own nature, with its craving for a solution of these mysteries, that he ever stands in need of working beliefs. These may be described by terms which are more or less acceptable; but however they be designated, it is beyond all question that they are urgently demanded. As already pointed out, the exponent of physical science uses them, and some of his most splendid discoveries are due to the use which he has made of them. The investigator of mental and moral phenomena needs them as he makes his strenuous efforts to reach truth and reality. In business even there must be some theory or plan, otherwise failure follows; and in the delightful field sports, too, he who in addition to alertness and strength has a knowledge of the game is most successful. But some thoughtless people say that they do not need theories, and with a touch of impatience in the tones of their voice exclaim, " Do not talk to us about them, or about what

you call working beliefs " ; but even these people cannot discharge their daily tasks or rightly enjoy life's pleasures without them ; for they are constantly, though perhaps unconsciously, assuming certain things as true, and upon these, their theories, they are also constantly acting.

Christianity claims no exception to this universal rule. It offers an explanation of human life. It presents certain truths to be believed ; and these, when intelligently held, make an interpretation of religion and a theory, of human life possible. It affirms that God is, and is personal, righteous, and all-loving ; that Creation is the work of His hands ; that He made man ; and that through the world and man He manifests Himself and discloses His glory. It further affirms that sin, with its defiance of God and its infraction of His law, with its guilt and disorder, has entered into the world ; that God in His infinite mercy has interposed on man's behalf, and sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world ; that Christ came and effected redemption which He now offers to all ; that the Holy Spirit convinces men of their sin, leads them to Christ, and interprets His teachings ; that the Scriptures are the Rule of life ; and that the Church is the agency through which the Kingdom of God is realised, and God's will is done.

II

These are its great leading truths ; but in order to guard against a possible misinterpretation of the Scriptures it should be said that the only legitimate point of view from which both the Old and New Testaments must be read is that which enables the reader to see in them mainly and chiefly a history of redemption. All else is subsidiary and complementary. They contain, however, many other things which are of great value. A record is given of many events. Page after page is occupied with secular history, but always with the view of providing an historical background on which is set God's redemptive Purpose as it is being slowly evolved. The writers of

the Scriptures, too, deal with natural phenomena, and take into their service the highest forms of art known to them. The singularly beautiful artistic setting of many of their writings, their sublime diction, and their lofty flights of poetry have ever arrested attention, and make the Scriptures, not only in the original tongues in which they are written, but also in all languages into which they have been rendered, a high model of literature.

But neither secular history, nor natural phenomena, nor art, nor poetry, constitutes the main design of the Scriptures. This, however, is often forgotten, and with regrettable results. Apparent contradictions in the historical statements are singled out for disapprobation, or physical science claims to be able to show how impossible are the miraculous deeds recorded; and the result not infrequently is that attention is directed from what is essential to what is only subsidiary. The faith of some is, therefore, on quite insufficient grounds shaken. At the present time, indeed, many writers are engaged either in assailing or in defending the historic events and movements which hold a prominent place in the Scriptures. Exponents of physical science contend with each other, some claiming that there is much in the sacred Writings which is in direct conflict with their observations and deductions, and others adopting a waiting attitude and declining to accept, while as yet the light is dim, any contradiction between Revelation and science.

The questions thus raised will perhaps always command attention; and some may be so engrossed with them as to be unable to see the wood for the trees.

But here is should be said that each question must be treated on its own merits, and that time and patience are needed on the part of assailants and defenders. But these questions, even when the fullest value is assigned to them, are only secondary. Besides, no one at present can pretend to say that the answers which are given to them have finality. And if not, attention should rather be directed to the Purpose of redemption which the

Scriptures unfold and exhibit, illustrate and offer for man's reverent contemplation and as the source of all his brightest hopes.

III

But now, keeping this needful correction in view, return to the great affirmations which Christianity makes. What use is, then, to be made of them? They manifestly account for the facts of human life. They give also a place to all that is valuable in that life. They likewise explain all man's hopes and aspirations. Since Christianity thus meets the deepest human needs, and interprets life as it is daily experienced, it is not too much to say that the Christian man with these affirmations before him can with intelligence and profound reverence avow, "*I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son and our Lord, in the Holy Spirit, in the Scriptures containing all things necessary for salvation and the Rule of life, in the Church Catholic, and in the Kingdom of God.*" Call this by any name; designate it a Creed or a Confession, it can none the less, however termed, be taken as a working belief, a theory of life within which all the great truths which make for life have their own place, and in which too justice is done to the revelation which God has been pleased to give of Himself and His redemptive Purpose.

This working theory of life can be put to the test of experience. Let anyone, for instance, hold firmly by the illuminating belief which these words describe, and he will go about his daily work with a theory of life which admirably fits his ever-changing conditions of life. Life's burdens and cares will be lightened, while its joys and opportunities of service will be greatly increased. He will see at once the meaning and end of his life, and interpret all events as containing some message for himself. He will be fitted to meet life's trials, and also enabled to make the fullest use of his endowments. For he will know himself as entirely dependent upon God's

grace, and his life as lying within the sweep of God's redemptive Purpose. He will be sustained, too, by the knowledge of all that Jesus Christ is to him, and has done for him. He will rely upon the Holy Spirit's teachings and find in the Scriptures that which ministers to and rules his life. He will associate himself with the Church, and know himself a member of a great living Body which exists as the Divinely appointed agency for the extension, and consolidation of the Kingdom of God.

A more adequate theory of life than this can scarcely be conceived. Its very fulness is the guarantee of its adequacy. A thousand times it has been put to the test, and men who have embraced it and lived by it have found their lives enriched and enlarged. To men burdened with many cares, and their outlook often dark, Christianity has thus come with its theory and interpretation of life, and has effected a transformation not only great and surprising, but one also which ensures satisfaction, repose, and self-realisation.

IV

One's estimate of the value of the Christian theory of life will be increased if its source be investigated. It will not, indeed, be out of place to reflect for a moment that the knowledge of all that belongs to the substance of the Christian Faith and gives an adequate theory of life is due to Revelation.

Reason, it is true, has much to say and teach. It raises negatively its warning voice, and tells you that you cannot account for the world and man's place in it in terms of chance. Nor can you explain either of these in terms of science; for science, as Schopenhauer was among the first to point out, only tells of sequence, and leaves the origin of things untouched. But Reason also speaks in positive terms. It sees wisdom, order, and beauty stamped upon creation, and power manifested everywhere It therefore concludes, notwithstanding all

that has recently been urged against the arguments from design, that there must be an intelligent and all-wise Creator. Again, Reason recognises Right and its reign, not only in the individual conscience, but also in all human relationships, otherwise society itself would fall to pieces. The rule and reign of Right point to the moral Governor of the world. And further, since human life is often permeated and beautified by pure affection, Reason infers that love's gracious sway must be traced to a Person who is all-loving. Still further, when the mind reflects upon human life, another inference may be drawn; for, perplexed by the evil and discord which are everywhere witnessed, Reason, at least, utters half-articulated sounds and recognises the need for a great Deliverer.

These are the legitimate inductions of Reason. They are far more valuable than any conclusions which *feeling* may appear to justify; for *feeling* is variable and uncertain; it depends upon ever-varying circumstances, and also upon its own moods and tenses. It is, therefore, of all bases on which to construct a theory of life, or a philosophy of religion, the most unstable and insecure.

There is to-day a distinct return to *feeling* as the guide and interpreter of the religious life both by religious teachers and exponents of philosophy. Mysticism, which is rooted in feelings and finds its element in them, is a well-marked note of many recent religious productions. It is not, perhaps, difficult to understand the prominence which is given to mysticism; for, in human nature there is, as has already been pointed out, an earnest craving for mystery, and at the same time a passionate longing for some authority on which to rest. This longing is begotten of the obscurity and uncertainty which necessarily accompany life's mysteries.

Mysticism has much to commend it, but it also has its dangers; for it often goes off at a tangent, and not infrequently remains unsatisfied till it finds an Authority that can speak in infallible language. Witness the career of Cardinal John Henry Newman, whose *Apologia pro*

Vita Sua discloses the operations of a fine mystic disposition, but also one which only found rest in a Church which claims to be infallible. The love of mystery and the love of authority, go hand in hand. The one craving leads to the other; and the justification of the one is that also of the other. Feeling which in the religious life has such a distinct record can scarcely be taken as a guide, or as that which supplies an adequate theory of life.

It would take one too far afield to indicate with anything like fulness the recent strenuous attempts which have been made by philosophers to displace Reason and put feeling or instinct in its place, but these efforts cannot be passed over in silence. Every one knows the prominent place which Hegel gave to Reason, and how he advocated the claims of idealism in terms of which all apparent differences are referred to a deeper unity for their reconciliation. It is to-day rightly enough argued that he did not do anything like justice to psychology and epistemology. He largely left *feeling* and *will* out of account, and did not develop a satisfactory theory of knowledge. His successors, such as Biedermann and Pfleiderer, have done their utmost to make amends for the master's defects, while eminent exponents of idealism, like Green and Edward Caird, have exhibited with great clearness the truths which it expresses; but notwithstanding all these efforts the present revolt against Hegelianism is quite distinct.

Reason is now, therefore, relegated to a subordinate place. Instinct, it is contended by Bergson and his followers, is far nearer to truth and reality. Empiricism, first notably advocated by Ritschl, and now by all pragmatists, is supreme, or, at least, endeavours are made to render it supreme. Its claims are only questioned by those who, adopting a doubtful symbol, take society as an organism [1] and make religion nothing higher than one of its functions.

[1] See my *Foundations of Society* for a criticism of society as an organism, p. 67. The main objection is that it explains life,

On the general philosophic position it may be permissible to say that the revolt against intellectualism is the resultant of an over-emphasis being laid by those who conduct the revolt, upon certain results of psychological analysis. By all means do the fullest justice to instinct and experience, as pragmatists insist should be done; but intellect has still its own claims which must be fully recognised. The balance must, however, be evenly held between each of these constituent elements of human life; for it is only when a careful synthesis is made of all the manifestations of personality that a philosophy of religion, a theory of knowledge, and an adequate interpretation of life are possibilities. Among these manifestations note must be taken of Reason and its operations. Its insight into the meaning of things is one of its distinctive achievements.

But, the philosophic question apart, it must be acknowledged that though Reason leads one far, and makes its own legitimate inductions, yet when all is said that can be adduced on behalf of Reason much in the religious life is still left unexplained. When, indeed, one examines the results of the endeavours which have been made in its name, one sees its manifest limitations, and turns with a fresh interest to Revelation on which the highest value is rightly set. For, as already stated, Revelation shows that God is, and is personal; that He is righteous, loving and gracious. He has spoken through men who revealed His will, but most distinctly of all by His well-beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has uttered His great living words in the light of which God is known, and a clear interpretation of human life is given. His words are spirit and truth, life and light-giving, authoritative and final. Whoever, therefore, seeks for a theory of life must stand in His Presence and listen to Him. "I am," He says, "the Bread of life." He thus satisfies

society, and religion in terms of biology which are misleading. It leaves no room for individuality and personal identity, while it issues in a monism which most philosophers now discard.

the hunger of the human soul ; and to have an experience of the spirit of His words is also to have insight into the theory of life which He has not only outlined, but likewise filled in with all that is essential to it.

But perhaps an increased appreciation of Christ's teachings is entertained when the long and earnest labours of investigators of the mysteries of human life are recalled. When, indeed, the results of their search are set out plainly, the beauty and value of His words appear all the more clearly. It was with much mental anxiety, and great spirit weariness that they toiled. They were unremitting in their labours, and they searched eagerly for a satisfying interpretation of life. One can picture the wistfulness with which they scanned the mental and moral horizon for some guiding truth, some star of hope ; and one can perhaps also understand their joy as they welcomed rays of light streaming through the darkness. But take the maximum of their findings, and yet how much is left unexplained. They advanced little beyond what their own hopes surmised ; they learned little beyond what customs, moulded by reflection into rules of conduct, suggested. They had, therefore, no interpretation of life more comprehensive than that which these findings yielded ; and here the conclusion is inevitable, that if no other light was shed upon human life than the feeble rays which guided their footsteps, the searcher after truth and reality would still be in darkness, and would also share their mental anxiety and spirit weariness.

V

All is, however, changed when one turns to the illuminating pages of Revelation, and especially when one stands in the Presence of Christ. Speaking to the searcher after truth out of the fulness of His own self-consciousness, He says, " I am the light of the world." Behold Him as thus He speaks, and the clearest light is seen to stream from His Person ; for He Himself is the Light.

See Him as He represents Himself scattering with the bright beams that flash from His Person the darkness which obscures men's way through life; follow Him, walk in His footsteps, and you do not merely look, entranced by the dazzling light, but you receive the light of life; it is yours, yours for self-absorption, and also for use—for action. Christ is Light for you, clear and certain; but not for you only, not for a single community or a single nation merely; He is light for the whole world.

It well repays one thus to stand in the Presence of Christ and listen to His gracious utterances with intelligence, with reverence, and with sympathy. There is not a shadow of doubt resting on His words as He speaks of the Father whom He revealed, of Himself as the Sent of the Father, and as Son of man, of the Holy Spirit who proceeds from the Father and Himself, of the Scriptures to the value and authority of which He often referred, of redemption through His own life and death, of the Church which He established, and of the Kingdom of God, the realisation of which is also the accomplishment of the Purpose of God in relation to man and the world.

These were the great truths which He taught; and all else in His teachings fall into their own befitting place. For He had many things of which to speak, and all of them were directly related to these truths. He spoke, for instance, of the evil in the world which He came to take away; of the personal trust in Himself which man must exercise; of the necessity of union with Himself; of man's place in the world; of the true meaning and interpretation of life; of the end for which man was created and is redeemed, and how that end can be reached; of the Spirit whom He promised to send as Teacher and Guide; of His own example which His followers must imitate; of the kindly deeds which they must do, of the forgiving, tolerant, and loving disposition which they must have and display; of the sacred obligation laid upon them to love as He loved, and to draw inspiration from Him for the discharge of every duty, and courage and

strength to bear every trial. He taught and insisted upon all these things, as His clearest-sighted servants have perceived, that man may live to the greater glory of the name of God.

No one ever thus spoke before Christ came. No one ever explained the full meaning of life as He did. There is, therefore, in the wide world no teacher or guide like unto Him. He stands alone and supreme. But He is not separated from men. He Himself was made flesh; and He passed through human life sanctifying every step and stage of it, thus proving the validity of the interpretation, and the truth of the theory of life which He gave. Now, therefore, with an authority which cannot be disputed, He bids His followers walk in His footsteps, and gives to them the assurance that they "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

Thus, the Christian Faith rests everything upon Christ and His interpretation of human life. It offers a theory of that life. The theory itself is altogether reasonable and adequate. It is not the resultant of idle fancies, or of speculation. It can be put to the test of experience. The guidance which it gives is sufficient for all the possible positions in which man can be placed. If man's life be formed according to what it requires, his life will ultimately reach its true goal; and, in full view of all that has been here adduced, it may be added that to possess such an adequate working theory of life is a great and positive benefit to all who consciously stand in presence of the mysteries of human life, and eagerly look for a solution of them.

CHAPTER X

RELIGION AND ITS REQUIREMENT OF THE HIGHEST MORAL LIFE

I

An examination of the content of religion reveals much more than the necessity of obedience to the moral law. The term "religion" is much wider than the word "morality"; but good moral actions are essential. Without them religion is an empty profession. It is a truism to say that faith and conduct go together. They are separable in thought; but they are as inseparable in life as the light which fills the world is from the sun, its source.

If, however, the fullest justice be done to religion's requirement in relation to the moral life, it is necessary to do more than merely point out the close connection between faith and conduct; for, religion requires for its adequate expression the highest possible moral life. Much more is needed than obedience to the law of right. Upright conduct, paying one's debts, and being distinguished for probity, are moral qualities altogether commendable, but they are not all that is required. A strong and beautiful religious life is not the outcome of uprightness and honesty alone. In addition, it requires generosity, kindliness, and a readiness to go to the utmost limit of love's demands. This is what is meant by the Apostle's remarkable words, "scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. v. 7, 8). St. Paul thus sees in Christ meeting

the greatest demands of love the Perfect Life, and also a motive and end of action very much greater than obedience to the law of right. The recognition of this motive and end, as operating factors in life, also enables one to understand what is meant when it is said, "ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom. vi. 14). A larger, freer life, a life which responds to the requirements of religion, is not only a possibility to those who are under grace, but is likewise demanded from them.

It will now be quite plain that, when religion and its requirements of the highest moral life are adequately treated, much more must be included in the treatment than just and upright actions alone. The fullest possible moral life is that which must be kept in view; for only as such a life is realised can the claims of religion be satisfied.

It will be necessary, therefore, to inquire, What are the moral qualities of the highest moral life? what their source? and how, according to the teachings of Christ, can they be acquired?

II

Before Christianity became a new moral force in society many beautiful moral qualities had been singled out by the Greeks for approbation. These had been progressively apprehended. The cultured exponents of the isolating egoism of Sophist teaching prepared the way for Socrates, who could not rest satisfied with their negations, but insisted upon *motive* as giving character to actions, and upon *knowledge* as the essence of virtue. Plato followed in his steps, and became "the father of idealism." He declared neither for *pleasure*, as did the Cyrenaics, nor for its negation, after the example of the Cynics, but was a moderating influence between them, teaching that while *pleasure* is not the end of life it is not inconsistent with that end. He also taught that the virtues are four

in number[1]—*justice, self-control, manliness,* and *wisdom* in the sense of *insight.* The Stoics, who did much to universalise morals, rose to the conception that virtue is the end of life, and must be sought for its own sake.

Now, great and winsome though the moral qualities be which the Greeks commended, they are far from being all that is required for the perfect moral life. It is the signal distinction of Christianity that it enunciates and enforces the additional virtues which crown life. From the gracious lips of Christ fell the illuminating words which give to moral life a far wider horizon and a far deeper meaning than anything which even the clearest-sighted Greeks ever taught. He accepted the virtues which they had singled out for commendation; but He set them in a clearer light and disclosed their true content. He also laid bare the only motive from which they can spring, and the *end* in the interests of which they must be cultivated. He gave to them, likewise, a higher value by exhibiting the loftiness of the standard, even that of His own perfect life, to which all who aim at imitation of that life must conform.

He further took these moral qualities to which He had thus given a clear setting, and greatly added to them; for He taught that *faith* must play an important part in the development of moral life; that *humility,* a lowly heart, is essential to it, saying, "learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. xi. 29); that *self-sacrifice* through personal devotion to Himself is absolutely necessary, "for whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. xvi. 25); and that *love* must govern the perfect moral life. These were the qualities which He emphasised. They are distinctive of His teachings, and they reveal the wealth of the content of the morals which beautify life, and are its requirement. But Christ also enlarged the ethics of the perfect life. Ancient moralists had laid emphasis upon *justice.* He substituted for that term the word *righteousness,* which

[1] See *Protagoras,* p. 329, and *The Republic,* Book IV. p. 428.

has a wider and deeper connotation. He accepted their teachings respecting temperance in the sense of self-control, and also much of what they taught concerning courage and insight ; but He gave to these moral qualities a new atmosphere, and refined them by means of a new spirit. He even greatly supplemented them, and showed that room must be found for, and a distinctive place be given to, mercy, purity, and a peacemaking disposition in the moral life. These are the moral qualities which stand out prominently in Christ's teaching, and they are essential to the highest moral life ; they are also its true ornaments.

But Christ likewise rendered the signal service to mankind of disclosing the source whence the highest moral qualities spring ; for He not only pointed out what makes for the most perfect moral life, but also whence are derived the qualities which adorn it. Besides, He showed, as will be seen in a moment, how these virtues are acquired.

III

First, as to the origin and source of Christian ethics. This subject has received little of the attention which it deserves.[1] The great majority of writers on Christian ethics assume that certain moral qualities are distinctive of Christianity, but do not take pains to investigate the question as to their origin and source. They do not even attempt to describe how intimately the moral teachings of Christ are related to His own Person, and to the truths which He revealed. Now, if religion's requirement necessitates the highest possible moral conduct, it surely throws light upon religion itself if it be clearly perceived whence comes that which beautifies life, and is its strongest commendation.

It may be said at once that Christ related all His moral teachings to Himself, and to the revelations which He

[1] See a discussion of this question in my *Christian Ethics and Social Progress*, pp. 18–36.

made. Christian ethics is, indeed, based upon Christ and His spiritual teachings. "I say unto you" was His authoritative pronouncement. There is no appeal from His words. His utterances are final. As the Revealer and Exemplar of the perfect life He speaks by a right which is all His own.

It is instructive to observe how our Lord proceeded in His public teachings. He appealed to the moral intuitions of His hearers, and His words ever found a response even when men refused to give effect to His gracious precepts. They could not but acknowledge that His words embodied truths which they could not deny. But He did more; for, claiming authority to speak on the highest of all themes, He set clearly before His hearers certain definite facts the acceptance of which, He told them, would transform and beautify the individual life, and issue in a new social order. That which He set before them was, first, His own mission as one of service, and pre-eminently of redemption. Next, He revealed God as Love, and His Purpose as having for its end the restoration of the lost, and thereby the manifestation before angels and men of the Divine wisdom and mercy; and, further, He described the mission of the Holy Spirit as one which had for its object the convincing of men of their sins, and the leading of them to Himself and into all truth.

These were His distinctive teachings, often restated and enforced; and on these higher revelations He based His moral imperatives. All His injunctions and precepts are referred to the will of God as He is revealed by Christ Himself. All commands are reflections of the Divine character. They are not arbitrary behests, nor are they isolated pronouncements. The great virtues, righteousness and love, are expressions of God's own nature; and men are urged to possess them that they may become God-like, and that their lives may be strong, beautiful, and fruitful. Christian ethics cannot, therefore, be separated or be explained apart from Christ and His teachings. As Christian experience is deeply rooted in

what His teachings imply, so morals, as He amplified and illumined them, have the character and end which He Himself has given to them. They are *Christian* because they are based upon Christ and reflect what He taught.

IV

But in addition to showing the source of the perfect moral life, our Lord also explained in the clearest terms how the virtues of that life are attained.

Here again it makes for instruction if His procedure in giving necessary guidance be observed. He began by requiring a personal trust in Himself. He next made the great demand on His followers that they should cultivate righteousness and love, humility and self-sacrifice. He presented thus a view of the perfect moral life, both as to its content and manner of attainment. The view was new. It was richer and fuller than anything that had ever been offered for acceptance. It disclosed life's enormous possibilities. It exhibited also the beauty and conquering power of the moral qualities of the perfect life.

The motive, too, which inspires one with a passion for these qualities was as much new as the view of life itself. Devotion to Christ and His will was the motive. Hitherto no teacher had made his teachings dependent on his person. The things which the great moralists taught were urged apart from the character of the teachers. The personal equation, it is true, had always its influence, but in no instance was it ever made essential. It was otherwise with Christ. He based, as just stated, His teachings upon Himself and the higher revelations which He made ; and He did this, one is entitled to say, because it is only through a personal union with Him that His followers can acquire the virtues of the perfect moral life. The evidence for the necessity of union with Christ is found in many of His great discourses. It lies also on almost every page of the Epistles of the Apostles ; and the necessity can be verified by any one who makes the

attempt of realising what a personal dependence on Christ carries with it. Know, for instance, something of what Christ is in Himself; be deeply and duly impressed by the great sacrifice which was made on your account; acquaint yourself with His gracious spirit, and His great imperatives; ascertain also something of the destiny for which He is fitting you, and you will at once realise your need of union with Christ, and feel yourself impelled to cultivate righteousness and love, faith and mercy, humility and self-sacrifice, purity and a peacemaking disposition.

But acts dictated by the motive which devotion to Christ supplies, and directed towards the possession of the moral qualities which beautify life, require ceaseless watchfulness and strenuous effort. They are not even attempted without encountering much opposition. The path of obedience is not easy. A life crowned with all the Christian graces is not accomplished in a day. Our Lord, therefore, never taught that to attempt to live the highest moral life is a light task. Nor did He ever mislead His followers by inducing them to believe that their path through life would be one strewn only with roses. "In the world," He told them, "ye shall have tribulation." With both solicitude and tenderness in His words He bade them "Watch and pray"; for watchfulness, resolve, and endeavour are all necessary. The righteousness of the Kingdom of God is not easily acquired. Love, again, a pure and strong affection, needs to be sedulously cultivated. The exercise of faith must be accompanied by earnest petitions for Divine aid as the Apostles felt when, recognising how hard it is to forgive trespasses, they cried, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke xvii. 5). Mercy must be often exercised in order that it may become spontaneous. Humility and self-sacrifice demand strenuous efforts. These virtues possess a conquering power, but they also lay a great strain on heart and will. Purity and a peaceful disposition, again, necessitate watchfulness and endeavour.

These fine moral qualities are, indeed, only acquired

according as account is taken of the greatness of the task which is imposed on those who strive to possess them. They must, however, to use the expressive simile of the Apostle, be "put on," as a garment; for self-realisation, that goal of which philosophy so often speaks in terms of the highest praise, is only attained when all the barriers which lie in one's path are surmounted, and the virtues themselves become one's possession. These high qualities are at once the essence and ornament of the perfect moral life; but it must again be said that they never come within one's reach unless the fullest account be taken of the opposition which one must look for, and for which one must be prepared. That needful lesson our Lord taught His Apostles. He often pressed it home upon them, but it applies to all His followers in all times, for He explicitly said, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark xiii. 37).

V

But whoever aims at adorning his life with the highest moral qualities must also rely upon Divine help. Our Lord definitely promises such assistance. He gives "grace upon grace"; and the strength which He imparts enables all who depend upon His grace to acquire the Christian virtues. Man's need of Divine aid is as obvious as it is urgent. It belongs to the commonplaces of the religious life to say that man cannot alone, and relying only upon his own wisdom, fight successfully life's battles. He needs both a wisdom and a power higher than his own. Accordingly the first needful lesson is learned when he knows his own limitations and sees the necessity of grace.

But just as experience proves the need of an effective and powerful aid, so there is nothing in experience which is more fully verified than the impartation of grace. It may not be possible to set out in clear terms how grace is communicated, but the fact of it is beyond dispute. God works through Word, Sacrament, and Providence on the mind, heart, and will. He strengthens good resolu-

tions; and He never disappoints those who rely upon Him. In a fine passage which records his experience of grace, St. Paul says, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need"; and he triumphantly adds, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 12, 13). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, making an induction from the High Priesthood of Christ, urges his readers thus: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 16). Grace was the theme on which all the Apostles dwelt with profound emotion. In nothing else did they more delight. They knew its value as well as their own need of it; and all subsequent Christian experience proves that it is only possible to attain to the perfect moral life according as grace is imparted and enjoyed.

But the enjoyment of grace is not to be taken as implying that those to whom it is given are not under a moral necessity to put their whole strength into the task of acquiring the Christian virtues; for Christ made it plain that while His followers rely upon His aid they must also do their best to win them. He likewise made it clear that the most powerful motive to a good life is a sense of the Divine forgiveness. The consciousness of reconciliation evokes affection, devotion, and service, the qualities which ever flourish in a beautiful and useful life. This is finely illustrated in the case of the woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair, and of whom He said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but," He added, "to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little" (Luke vii. 47).

Thus, the Divine method of uplifting man to the highest possible moral life implies the co-operation of grace, and effort on man's part. God forgives the penitent and binds them to Himself; but He requires at their hands

obedience to the laws of His kingdom, obedience which is the outcome, not of legal enactments, but of a sense of reconciliation to God, the purest motive that can dictate actions. Obedience, however, is only rendered effectively when Divine grace interposes and imparts aid. Upon grace, therefore, the follower of Christ must rely. With intense solemnity and finality marking His words, Jesus said, " Without Me ye can do nothing " (John xv. 5). They learn one of the first, and also one of the most invaluable, of all lessons who learn to depend upon Christ. He gives freely and abundantly both wisdom and strength ; and in reliance upon Him is found the secret of progress towards the perfect moral life.

Grace and personal moral effort are not, however, inconsistent with each other. Divine agency and the exercise of free-will are not mutually exclusive. " Work out your own salvation " is an imperative which is only misapprehended by those who deny the possibility of the co-operation of Divine grace and human endeavour. But experience proves that the two can coexist together, and operate effectively ; for the imperative " Work out your own salvation " is followed at once by the reminder, " It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure " (Phil. ii. 13). To pray and labour, to labour and pray, is to conform to the conditions under which progress towards moral attainments is alone possible. The law of the kingdom of grace necessitates obedience to the will of God while depending upon His gracious aid. Whoever observes this law has the guarantee that his life will grow strong and beautiful. This law is never revoked, and it must never be left out of view.

Our Lord also taught, and that too with great insistence, the necessity of personal service after His example. In many different forms of words, but always to the same effect, He required at the hands of His followers service in imitation of His own. Whoever, therefore, strives after the highest possible moral life has the example of Christ as a sure guide to that life. When in marvellous

humility He stooped to perform the menial act of washing the feet of His disciples, He gave for all time an illustration of the service which His followers must willingly humble themselves to render; for He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii. 15).

This is perhaps one of the brightest rays of light which He has thrown upon conduct. It reveals both *motive* and *end*. The light streams clear and pure from His own Person and example. It illumines the whole sphere of service and makes the path of duty plain.

No longer, therefore, need anyone who earnestly seeks for guidance as to how high moral qualities can be attained walk in a dim uncertain light. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John xiv. 6), is His great and rightful claim. He calls attention to Himself, and emphasises His own Personality. It is man's high privilege to stand with reverent thought and lowly feeling in His Presence and listen to Him. His words do not embody abstract rules of conduct. As already stated, He does not lay down hard and fast laws. He appeals to *spirit*. Hear His gracious utterances. He pours out words which show the way, and the only way, by which life's highest ideals, personal and social, can be attained. You are bent upon obtaining, and you strain all your energies in order to possess the qualities which make your life strong and useful, but to attain them you must follow Him. The deeds of kindliness and mercy which He performed in obedience to the claims of love, you must also attempt in His name and from devotion to Him. The spirit which animated Him must also impel you. "For His sake" must be your motive, and likeness unto Him your end.

Jesus well knew how great was the demand which He made upon His followers when He bade them take up their cross and follow Him. He "pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). How hard it is to live up to this ideal! Cross-bearing always entails self-sacrifice. No two crosses are alike, but each individual must bear his own. Jesus

bore His own cross; and every one who follows in His footsteps must be a cross-bearer. This is the unalterable condition under which it is possible to go after Him. The spectacle of a long line of cross-bearers, Christ Himself leading the van, which thus rises before one's vision may be dolesome; but, however sad-looking, it is also one into the full meaning of which whoever has insight can also perceive the sole condition under which the highest moral life is possible.

The world is burdened with sins and sorrows. Right is ever loudly protesting against the wrong. There are many who oppress and exploit their fellow-men. Injustice rules and reigns. The friendless are legion, and they carry the heavy load of weary spirits and sad hearts. But who are they that lift the burden from the shoulders of the oppressed and friendless? Whoever else they may be, the self-pleaser is not one of them. He seeks only personal advantage. He has neither time nor disposition to help the needy. He is all for gaining possession, and place, and power; and he has his reward in an empty life; for, since he never entertains thoughts as to what might relieve the oppressed and cheer the friendless, there is in store for him neither affection, nor gratitude, nor esteem. A life which wins none of these things is indeed empty.

But what of those who strive to be like unto Christ, and are cross-bearers? Theirs is a different life with a different outlook and end. It is distinguished by disinterested deeds willingly done; and this makes for nobility of character. Many will rise up to bless them, but they have now and here the joy which comes from helping the needy. They have also through their self-denial an enlarged life and a widened horizon. Truly whoever saves his life loses it, while he who spends his life in service finds it again greatly enriched. This is religion in act, religion which flowers in winsome moral qualities, and that because it is rooted in Christ and owes its growth to the influence of His inspiring example.

He pre-eminently spent His life in doing good. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). It is not, therefore, surprising that He by His life and example turned the course of human life, and made all things new. The gracious power with which He has invested and inspired His followers ever remains as the explanation of the righteousness and love, the faith and mercy, the humility and self-sacrifice, the purity and peace-making, which are the distinguishing notes of the highest moral and religious life.

VI

But one thing more in Christ's inculcation of the highest moral qualities deserves attention. There is a marked progression in His teaching. This has not, so far as I have been able to observe, been singled out for special notice by exponents of Christian ethics; but it is quite manifest and lies on the surface of the evangelists' narratives.

In His public instruction and in His more private training of the Twelve, our Lord said much about righteousness, humility, purity, a merciful and forgiving disposition, and a trust in God's providence. He urged steadfast perseverance and consistent conduct. He spoke, too, in the strongest terms against ostentatious display in the discharge of duties, and against hypocrisy and a spirit of retaliation. But He reserved till the closing days of His ministry His special teachings about love. When, after the long training of the Twelve, they were fit to respond to His highest requirement, He then spoke of love, and in the tenderest tones insisted upon its claims. There is a great difference between the content of the Sermon on the Mount and that of the great discourses in the Upper Room. It is true that in the Sermon He enjoined love as such, and love to one's enemies (Matt. v. 44, 46), and also at a later period in His ministry love to one's neighbours (Matt. xix. 18), and supremely love to

God (ibid., xxii. 37); but it was not until His last days that He urged with manifestly strong emotion the claims of love, and bade His followers love as He loved them. In St. John's Gospel from the thirteenth chapter to the seventeenth, there are no less than nineteen statements all of which have love as their theme; and in every instance it is the stronger word *ἀγαπάω*, and not *φιλέω*, which is used.

It is beyond dispute that there are certain moral qualities more easily acquired than others, and also that the highest of them all is love. This is the virtue which crowns life; it is the fulfilling of the whole law, but it is perhaps the one which is only at last fully possessed. The practice of the others leads up to it, and it is gradually acquired as union with and dependence upon Christ are realised. Love is also the strongest and most beautiful of all the virtues. "It will be noticed," says Bishop Westcott, "that the foundation of the Apostolic office is laid in love and not in belief." [1] Love rules all and governs all things. It is the last lesson, and it is likewise the most imperative one, which our Lord teaches. It is religion's great requirement and ornament; and for all time our Lord has made plain the way by which it can be acquired. He Himself is its Source, and in growing into His likeness love is experienced. "We love [2] because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19) is the explanation of its origin and conquering power.

[1] See Bishop Westcott's *Introduction and Notes on St. John's Gospel*, p. 302.

[2] The *Revised Version* omits *him*, and "leaves the idea of love in its full breadth without any definition of its object" (see Bishop Westcott on the First Epistle of St. John *in loco*).

CHAPTER XI

RELIGION AND ITS INTERPRETATION OF MORAL FREEDOM

I

In examining the claims and in offering an interpretation of religion one requires to go even beyond the questions which have been already considered. It is necessary to ask and also attempt an answer to the further question, whether the Christian religion offers any explanation of the perplexities which are encountered when free agency and moral responsibility are submitted to a searching investigation. An endeavour will be made to treat with some fulness this question which has for philosophy, and especially for psychology, as well as for religion, an engrossing interest.

When a person passes by an effort of pure thinking, or, better still, by a personal experience, from the domain wherein are seen the havoc and misery, the ruin and death, which sin has produced, into the realm where the love and mercy, the grace and power of God are co-operating for man's moral and spiritual restoration, the question of free agency and moral responsibility at once arises for him, and he is obliged to try to solve it. Standing on the border-line of these two provinces, and looking backward, he sees only chaos and darkness, but looking forward his eye is at once arrested, and his mind fascinated by the order, harmony, and peace of the province of grace.

Before, however, he crosses the threshold of the domain sacred to grace, he must try to answer such questions

as: What is the moral condition to which sin reduces those who have done wrong? How far has sin affected their ability, say, to turn to God and to do His will? In what sense are they free agents, and to what limits does their moral responsibility extend? The importance of these questions cannot be over-estimated; for if right and true views of them be not entertained it is quite impossible to understand the laws which obtain within the province of grace, or to know the conditions under which gifts are given, or with a grateful heart to thank the Giver of them. One might even go further and affirm that a person's thoughts of God, and his conduct as influenced by these thoughts, are all coloured, and indeed determined, by the answer which he returns to these questions.

II

Fortunately sufficient materials lie to hand in attempting an answer to these questions. For, first, as to the moral condition to which sin, the gravest fact in human life, reduces those who commit it, experience and Revelation both teach that sin deranges the powers of the soul. It throws them into disorder. It produces a distorted moral vision; and as an inevitable result right moral judgments become difficult. A person who persists in doing wrong has his soul's powers so blunted that by and by he loses sight of moral distinctions. It next entails also a loss of moral power. You cannot do wrong without feeling a keen sense of moral weakness. Every person knows that this is true. The testimony of the most cultured and that of the most illiterate confirm it. There is indeed no other fact in human life more mournfully patent than the instant loss of moral power when wrong is done. To this condition, therefore, sin reduces all who permit its baleful influence to master them.

But these are not the only issues of wrong-doing; for every infraction of the moral law gives to heart and mind a bias towards evil. It makes the next temptation, as

experience proves, less easily resisted; and the explanation of such an experience lies in this, that the soul robbed of moral power by the act of evil which has been done has its capacity for resisting temptation greatly lessened. It is weaker, and its bias towards evil is increased. In whatever heart sin has a place this effect is experienced; and this experience, therefore, further describes the condition to which sin reduces all who harbour it.

A person who has regard to his own well-being, and is anxious to know how it can be attained, is bound to take account of these widely attested facts. In our Lord's life there is a striking incident which by way of contrast brings them prominently into view. When the shadow of the Cross was falling upon Him, forgetting the danger which threatened, He seized the occasion to speak words of counsel to His disciples, saying, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Then He told them that He must go unto the Father, and that He must cease speaking to them. A great crisis in His own life was at hand, and He had to brace Himself to meet it. "The prince of this world," He suddenly cried, "cometh." Another fierce onslaught was to be made upon His will by the tempter; but, He added, he "hath nothing in Me." Never before had Christ more plainly affirmed His sinlessness. These words stand out distinctly. They reveal our Lord's consciousness that evil had not mastered Him, and that when the prince of the world made a final attempt to overcome Him, there was nothing in Him that would respond to the temptation.

But with man it is far different, for when evil assails him it makes its assault upon one whose powers are already deranged and disorganised; it storms a citadel already weakened by many breaks in its walls; and, saddest fact of all, it finds many traitors within only too ready to open the gates and let the enemy enter. This is the experience which John Bunyan graphically depicts in his

wonderful allegory in which *Mansoul* is represented as a city that fell as much by foes within as by assailants outside it. The experience is common to all men. The powerful bias towards evil responds to temptation, and makes the assault not infrequently only too successful. Human life, indeed, tells this painful story all too often. There is no one whose experience does not confirm it. Whoever, therefore, tries to understand human life, and its baffling problems, must take account of this universal experience.

But this is not all of which account must be taken; for whenever sin finds a place in the human heart it so operates as to produce certain inclinations and desires which rule and reign with extraordinary power. These inclinations and desires are born of sin, and are in their character evil. They are ever asserting themselves; and every human heart, therefore, is a seat of conflicting and opposing affections. The strongest drive the man in whose heart they rule before them as the gallant ship is driven before the furious tempest. Many a man makes shipwreck of himself by being wholly under the influence of strong and evil passions. They dominate his will and determine its volition; and, bringing him under their power they make him their sport and play. They destroy his life, and spell for him ruin. These are grave facts in human life; no one can dispute them; and they invite an explanation. It must be a great gain if they are not only taken into account, but are also seen to be capable of interpretation.

Perhaps the most helpful manner in which an interpretation can be offered is to examine the moral disorder which sin produces in the human heart, the loss of moral power which it entails, the strong bias to wrong-doing which accompanies transgression, and the evil desires and inclinations which sin creates; and when this has been done with care, next, to observe the effect of all these on the freedom of the will when one sets oneself to respond to the Divine claims and to render obedience to the laws

of the Kingdom of God. For if there be a clear recognition of the extent to which the will is affected by sin and of its consequences, much light is thrown upon the question of the freedom of the will, and under what conditions the will operates; and further, the need of grace both at the beginning and also at every step and stage of the Christian life is at once seen.

This brings one to the common plane on which human life, with its perplexing problems, its crises and cares, is daily passed. Evil is, and prevails everywhere. It is only Divine grace which can enable men to overcome it. But grace operates after a definite manner. It is not arbitrary. It is freely offered, and it ever co-operates with the human will. The will is free; but it, again, is not unconditioned. A thousand things play upon it and determine its operations.

III

Free agency may be thus stated: The will is endowed with the mysterious power of originating thoughts and actions. Its volitions carry with them responsibilities, but still the will is free; and in this it is different from anything in the material world within which all things act as they are acted upon. The coal burns on the hearth, because long ages ago heat has been stored up in the coal. The engine rushes along because of the generated steam which drives it; and so on throughout all inanimate things. But man, unlike nature, is gifted with the power of originating thought and action. That is an element of his being. For lack, perhaps, of a better term, it is spoken of as the spontaneity of the soul; but how it originates things no one can tell; for whenever an effort is made to watch the operations of the originating cause one soon discovers that one cannot penetrate deep enough. All that is seen is what looks like a chain of operations, each link assuming the aspect of cause and effect. But this does not lead one far. The spontaneous power of

the will is still undiscovered. This is a mystery of man's being, a mystery which lies deep in every human being, and greater far than anything which the material world presents. When one stands in presence of this mystery one reaches the impassable limits of human thought. Yet the power of the will to originate things is a part of daily experience. Every one is conscious of it. The will is free, and the mind is, indeed, every hour sending forth troops of thoughts. One cannot sit down for a brief time without setting thoughts in motion and devising many projects; but whence comes the power to do these things is a mystery which philosophy from the earliest days has been trying to explain, but has not yet solved. Philosophy has, indeed, often confessed that this is a mystery beyond explanation, and that attempts to analyse the power of the will to originate thought and action often ends in the confusion of consciousness itself.

The fact of the will's power, however, remains, and no one questions it. Taking, then, the fact without any endeavour to resolve it into its elements, the question which it raises is closely related to another which brings one back to those consequences of sin already detailed. The will has, as just explained, the mysterious power of self-decision; but, as also already seen, it is affected by moral disorder: it has lost a certain amount of its moral power through wrong-doing; it has a bias towards evil for the same reason; and within the human heart have been created certain desires, affections, dispositions, all the outcome of sin operating upon the heart. Now, it is the record of a universal experience that all these come more or less into play in every volition and free act. They give to volition and act both character and direction. They, indeed, often determine them; and observe how they operate. Every time that thought is originated, and a certain course of action is willed, they exercise a masterful force. The will is free; yes, but the character and direction of the thing decided upon always more or less reflect the colour and influence of the affection and bias

which are present in the moment and act of coming to a decision. And, again, it is only to repeat the record of experience to say that the prevalent desires often win the day. A man is as his affections are. If they be low, mean, and grovelling, or if they be pure and clean, his actions will be a reflection of them; for at every step and stage of the will's volitions his affections make their powerful influence felt. Man cannot will otherwise than he desires to will.

But account must be taken of the *character* of most of man's desires. Keeping close to experience, one is obliged to confess that since sin rules and reigns more or less in all human hearts it has produced evil desires and inclinations which powerfully affect will and action. Furnished though man be with a moral sense which distinguishes between the true and false, and with conscience which tells what is right and what is wrong, yet his habitual evil dispositions disregard the testimony of his moral sense, and often silence the voice of conscience. The cause of this is all too manifest. His affections and dispositions are coloured and determined by sin. He is in bondage to sin's powers. Sin has vitiated the heart's affections. Its taint is always too evident. It sways even the will and, indeed, the whole man.

IV

It will now perhaps be seen in what sense man is a free moral agent, and also to what extent he enjoys moral freedom, and is responsible for his actions. Upon these questions daily experience is the best commentary; for it plainly tells that the desires and dispositions of the heart are perverted; and if the full import of this grave fact be apprehended, it is at once perceived that man's freedom of will and ability to respond to the Divine call are circumscribed by his affections and desires. They influence him, they override the will, they adversely affect its originating power, and give it a false

direction. It was this grave fact which St. Paul had before his mind when he penned the words "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Experience proves this every day. Man's desires, affected by sin, do not lead him towards God. They do not give birth to one wish for His Presence. They are rather barriers standing in the way of man's return to God. The Scriptures further confirm experience. "The heart," it is written, "is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" "I am carnal, sold under sin," is the confession of St. Paul; and he adds, "that which I do, I allow not; for what I would that do I not: but what I hate that I do." Passages do not require to be repeated. There are many which bear witness to the same truth.

There are, however, some people who reject the statements of Scripture as exaggerations; but when these statements are confirmed by experience they are obliged to give consideration to them. It perhaps does not so much matter on what grounds conclusions are reached if the findings themselves be correct. In this instance a mistake is almost impossible. Sin has deeply affected the human heart, and has rendered even the will often powerless in presence of temptation. These are facts attested by Scripture and confirmed by experience. They cannot be treated lightly. They demand attention; and they bring into the clearest light both the extent to which the will is circumscribed in its operation, and also man's responsibility for his wrong-doing. The blame cannot be laid on heredity or environment. These, indeed, are powerful factors; they handicap many a man in the battle of life; but they cannot be urged as adequate excuses for wrong-doing. Each man is free: he may have to cope with hereditary tendencies; he may be deeply humbled as he sees these bringing him into subjection to their sway; he may be constrained, like St. Paul, to confess, "What I would that do I not"; but he cannot escape moral responsibility. He is brought, indeed,

face to face with the weightiest and most urgent of all questions: How can sin, its curse and power, be taken away? How can freedom of will be exercised without evil desires gaining the day? How can true liberty be enjoyed?

V

To these questions only one answer can be returned; grace must interpose. Sin's rule and reign cannot be broken by the human arm. Dispositions and desires cannot be changed by an effort of will. Man cannot purify his heart's affections; he cannot of his own strength stem the strong current of vitiated emotions which rush in upon him. There are no hidden and unexplored recesses in his heart whence he may look for the power which gains the victory over evil. Grace is, therefore, a necessity; it must operate through the new birth to a free righteous life. "Ye must be born from above," said our Lord to Nicodemus. This profound saying can now, in view of what has just been stated, be understood. To the human heart must be given new desires, new affections, new direction. It must be radically changed; it must be regenerated. But the renaissance of the soul is God's work. The Lord Jesus Christ is offered as the Saviour of the world; and "whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 John v. 1). How the mighty change, designated by the term "regeneration," is effected no one can tell. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8).

The change is a reality; and it is God's work. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8). Man, it must be repeated, cannot effect his own restoration. He cannot turn to God apart from Divine grace. That may seem a hard saying; and many without sufficient reflection may reject it. But in rejecting it they have to explain

away their own experience; for it is a fact of experience that man does not possess the power to change his own moral state by an act of will; and why? Because his prevailing evil dispositions and desires sway him, and turn him away from God. Grace must, therefore, interpose, and change his heart.

But grace is also necessary at every subsequent step and stage of the Christian life. In the act of regeneration new life is communicated to the soul. A new disposition is imparted. New desires and new aspirations are also given. The whole current of thought and feeling is, indeed, changed and flows towards God. But old habits are not rooted out in a day. For the human heart is like a garden in which the seed of weeds has been sown. This seed, hidden from the eye, often unexpectedly springs up and hinders the growth of the new life. Grace is, therefore, as much required for the discharge of daily duties as it is in the act of regeneration.

A perfect moral life is not the work of a day. The Westminster divines rightly said that "conversion is an *act* of God's free grace, wherein He pardoneth all our sins"; and that "sanctification is a *work* of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God." The distinction between act and work is true to experience; for while the new birth is instantaneous, the perfection of the new life which has been imparted is a long, arduous work, entailing constant watchfulness and effort. Grace, prevenient and persevering, is as needful as converting grace. Man needs discipline. He must enter into the school of Christ and submit himself to His teachings. He must be taught; for he is like

> Iron dug from central gloom; and heated hot with burning fears
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears, and battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use.

Old dispositions and deeply rooted desires are not easily subdued. The strength of the habits formed before con-

version are, indeed, often the measure of the progress that is made after the great moral change has taken place. If a man, for instance, has been worldly—perhaps the deepest vice to eradicate—or if he has encouraged a spirit of malice, or a hasty temper and judgment, these evil traits in his character will again and again assert themselves. He will be constantly under the influence of the very habits which he has professed to discard; and his progress will be largely determined by the measure in which he overcomes this influence. His will be a hard fight, and special grace will be for him a necessity.

It was said at the beginning of this chapter that within the realm of grace the love, mercy, and power of God are co-operating for man's moral and spiritual restoration. This is at once man's comfort and encouragement. He is not alone. The grace which issued in regenerating him continues in the arduous life-battle which he is fighting. As he did not of himself turn to God, he is not dependent only upon himself now that he is striving to do God's will. But still old habits and inclinations operate with the force of a law, and he is obliged with St. Paul to say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. vii. 23). But born of the Spirit, he will ultimately overcome all barriers to his progress. He must not, however, relax his efforts or be off his guard. Nor must he assume that grace ever operates save through his will and affections. These things are sometimes forgotten; and many a man, folding his arms, contents himself with the assurance that grace will be given to him while he in the meantime makes no serious efforts to refrain from hatred, malice, an evil tongue, or a too ready judgment upon another person's conduct. Not thus does grace find conditions for its operations; not thus do the laws of God's kingdom allow any man to act. Dependence upon Divine grace is man's great privilege; but coupled

with this privilege there must be watchfulness, resolution, and effort.

When, therefore, human life is interpreted in the light of the Christian Faith, man's free agency and moral responsibility are clearly perceived. Man is free; he has the gift of self-decision; but sin has interposed with its baleful power. It gives birth to evil desires, dispositions, and inclinations. These, as has already been shown, all too often rule the volitions of the will. They give them direction, and all too frequently determine their character. Ruled and swayed by them, man is often rendered helpless. But grace intervenes. In regeneration it gives new life and creates desires and aspirations after the will of God. In sanctification it operates powerfully and renews the whole man after the image of God. These are facts as valid and as often experienced as any that lie within human life. In the light of them man's freedom of will is seen to be real, but also conditioned, on the one hand, by sin and its products, and, on the other, by Divine grace operating on the will, purifying the affections, and giving to man a new, larger and truer liberty: for "where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17); and the freedom which the liberated man enjoys is "freedom to do good."

> Freedom to seek the good of all
> And seek the hurt of none;
> Freedom to serve mine enemy
> With good instead of ill.
> Freedom to make my love to him
> Reverse his erring will.

VI

A brief review of what has been stated will enable one to perceive the explanation of a series of problems to the solution of which philosophy has from the earliest days set itself. The freedom of the human will has ever been its crux. Theories innumerable have been applied

to its interpretation. Psychology has done its best to throw light upon the operations of the will; but the result has too often only been affirmations and denials. Philosophy alone cannot explain freedom of will and moral responsibility. The most searching analysis of mental states which has ever been conducted leaves the investigator without an adequate solution. But examine freedom of will and moral responsibility in the light of Revelation, and its interpretation will at once be seen as wholly in agreement with the facts of experience, and therefore altogether reasonable. It teaches plainly that man is free and responsible; that sin has disorganised the soul; that man cannot without Divine grace resist evil and do good; that God has in His infinite mercy interposed on man's behalf; that of His grace He works in man, enabling him "to will and to do" the right; and that if man relies upon Divine grace, while at the same time using all his own powers, he will attain to true freedom and find self-realisation in submitting his will to the will of God; for that is the one condition under which freedom is attained, since it is only enjoyed when one submits one's will to a higher and better will than one's own.

But much more can be accomplished than the solution of the questions which have perplexed philosophers. For in reviewing the statements which have been made, does not one find in them an explanation of daily experience? Deny, for instance, as some have done, that the freedom of the will is circumscribed and conditioned by evil desires and inclinations, born of sin, and you must conclude that man can without Divine grace turn from his wrong ways and live the good life. But experience does not support this claim. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jer. xiii. 23).

Again, does not what has been said help one to understand the law which operates within the kingdom of grace, and the gifts which grace bestows? Man does

not merit or win these gifts. They are given freely; but He who confers them also makes plain the laws and conditions under which they must be used. They are not given for selfish ends. They are for use, and the fields in which they are to be employed are the lives of one's fellow-men. But further, if one recognises that God is the Giver of all that crowns human life and makes it useful, one cannot but also acknowledge that gratitude is that which most befits man; but the deepest gratitude which man can entertain and cherish expresses itself in confessing his dependence upon God, in submitting himself to God's will, in striving to grow in likeness to Christ, and in living worthy of the dignity with which Divine grace has invested him. Whoever perceives these things clearly will also apprehend the befitting place which they occupy in that view of human life which does amplest justice to freedom of will and moral responsibility as these are interpreted by the Christian Faith and verified in daily experience.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SOCIAL LIFE

I

In the preceding chapter evidence has been adduced which proves that the great truths which minister to the religious life likewise offer a solution of questions which philosophers from the earliest days have discussed, but have been unable to answer. It has also been proven that the facts in the religious life, as they are interpreted by the Christian Faith, greatly help one to explain the problem of free-will and moral responsibility which is one of the most baffling of these questions. But another question invites attention: Does Christianity throw as much light upon social life, and its problems, as it casts upon the perplexities of Philosophy? And if so, what is the bearing of religion on social life? Does the answer returned to this inquiry yield an equally satisfactory result? Examine this practical issue.

Immediately before the outbreak of the Great War this question was receiving widespread and thoughtful attention. The Church of England in her Congresses, and the Nonconformist Churches in their Conferences, discussed, with great benefit to their respective members, the social question, and that too from the religious point of view. The Churches recognised that the social question is acute and demands treatment in the light which the Christian Faith throws upon it. But it should be remembered that it is only within the last few years that an endeavour has been made by the Churches in Congress

and Conference to ascertain the social teachings of the Christian religion. The endeavour is earnest; but it can scarcely be said that the attempt is also scientific and thorough. Though the most convincing apologetic on behalf of Christianity is found in these teachings, they are as yet treated too intermittently, and also with too little accurate knowledge.

The scientific treatment of the social question from the Christian point of view is urgent. It was the deliberate opinion of Bishop Westcott that "God is calling us in this age through the characteristic teachings of science and of history to seek a new social application of the Gospel" and that all "endowments of character, of power, of place, of wealth" must be held as "a trust to be administered with resolute and conscious purpose for the good of men."[1] One might add that through the concrete needs of the poor, and the wretched conditions under which they eke out a livelihood, an equally loud call is heard; and that endowments, as a trust, must be insisted upon in view of the vast accumulation of wealth which some have gathered, and the pinching poverty to which tens of thousands are subjected. These things emphasise the call to examine and apply the social teachings of the Gospel to social life.

But social life, as the Sacred Writings deal with it, still waits for thorough investigation and enlightened treatment. The attitude which many Christian people adopt towards the perplexing problems of social life, and the half-hearted recognition, tinged with a degree of suspicion, which the Church gives to those of her members whose time and energy are spent in trying to solve the social question, scarcely justify one in holding that the greater number of the Church's members are alive to their opportunities and duty. The time, however, must come when the wide province of social life, as that is dealt with and illumined by the prophets of the Old Testament, by our Lord Himself, and by His

[1] *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 147.

Apostles, will receive the attention which it deserves, and be treated scientifically and thoroughly.

II

In dealing with religion in relation to social life instead of ranging discussion over a wide field of subjects, it will be better to select one crucial test, and try to ascertain what contribution Christianity makes. Take Christian altruism as it operates in social life as the test. An adequate treatment of this single subject will go a long way towards showing what the Christian religion is fitted to effect towards social betterment. All social reformers aim at the improvement of social relationships and social life itself. If their solution be offered and urged, the claims of Christianity as it deals with social affairs are also entitled to be heard and weighed.

If, then, Christian altruism in social life be taken, an instructive illustration is at once supplied respecting one of the most powerful principles of true social actions, and of a healthy social order. "None of us," writes St. Paul, "liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8). In these few words the motive of right actions is described, and the end of human life is defined. Man's life is not his own to do with it what he likes; it is God's gift, and must be used in His service. All self-seeking is excluded by the very terms of the gift. Self-pleasing is not the *end* of life; for "none of us liveth to himself." This view of life and its potentialities is almost exclusively Christian. It is certainly very distinctive of the Christian Faith.

But a brief explanation of St. Paul's words is necessary; for some do not hesitate to say that you are unjustifiably sheltering yourself behind Holy Scripture when you take a passage like this and insist upon altruism as against

individualism. Examine, therefore, the Apostle's words. A narrow exegesis of what he has written limits the application of the principle which he expresses to controversies respecting certain Jewish festivals, and meals which might or might not be eaten. But whoever holds by this limitation manifestly takes a far too exclusive view of St. Paul's words, and denies himself the use of a theory of life and a rule of conduct which are of the greatest practical value.

It is, indeed, true that St. Paul, by insisting that "none of us liveth to himself," found a solution of certain much-debated ceremonial questions in his day; but it holds equally good that the principle which solved these questions has many applications. It is, for instance, used by our Lord when He taught that God is "not a God of the dead, but of the living"; for, He added, "all live unto Him" (Matt. xxii. 32). Speaking out of his own personal experience, St. Paul says, "I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God" (Gal. ii. 19); and he reminds the members of the Church of Corinth that they "are bought with a price," and he therefore urges them to "glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. vi. 20). To the same effect are the teachings of St. Peter, who argues, "as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh," His followers should no longer live the rest of their time "in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (1 Pet. iv. 2).

The principle has thus many applications. But an analysis of the phrase "to live unto God" is necessary in order to ascertain on what basis altruism rests. Now, our Lord has both fully explained and also beautifully illustrated the scope and meaning of this pregnant sentence. For He taught that to lose one's life in service prompted by devotion to Himself is to realise one's true life-goal. "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." "For My sake" indicates the impelling motive to service, and also interprets the words "unto God," while "to lose" one's life is to deny oneself after the example of Christ; it is to take up one's cross and follow Him.

It is significant that all the Gospels, the Synoptic as well as the Fourth, give prominence to our Lord's teachings respecting this vital subject. They place these teachings beyond dispute.

But our Lord also beautifully illustrated His own teachings as to the meaning of the phrase "to live unto God." For His life was pre-eminently one of service. He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. xx. 28). "He pleased not Himself" (Rom. xv. 3). He appealed to His actions, and said, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John vi. 38). The rule and motive of His life was "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). Thus He illustrated, as He had often taught, the meaning of "living unto God." He has, therefore, made it plain as noonday what His followers must attempt to do.

But it may be said, "We accept your interpretation of St. Paul's words; we recognise the principle which they embody, and also its many implications. Why then waste further time in discussing and enforcing the obvious?" This is by no means an imaginary reply. One hears it often; and it is not infrequently made with the object of putting as far away as possible the application of Christian ethics to social life.

Now, if history teemed with evidence that men had on a large scale obeyed the principle which St. Paul's words embody and express; or, if Christian men to-day acted upon this principle in all their social and business relationships; or, if society at present could legitimately be described in its terms; or, if in the higher fields of philosophic research, wherein the world's great thinkers have sought their theories of moral life, it could be shown that philosophers have declared for this principle, then might it be affirmed that the phrase "no man liveth unto himself" is a statement self-evident and indisputable, and, therefore, requiring neither further elucidation, nor defence, nor even enforcement.

III

Consider, in turn, each of these suppositions :—

1. History does not supply evidence that men in large numbers have obeyed the principle which St. Paul states and enforces. It rather tells the painful tale of ruthless conflicts and terrible sufferings. That is its record, and no comment upon it is needed.

2. Christian men to-day do not in their social and business relationships act upon the altruistic principle enunciated by St. Paul. Caste reigns all too prevailingly. Distinctions based, not on personal merits or service, but on material possessions, are unblushingly made. Wealth is honoured, and is allowed to exercise great power. Riches, as a trust, have their legitimate place, but as an ancient poet saw, and as it is open to anyone to-day to see, there are those who " boast themselves in the multitude of their riches " and whose " inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever." These " call their lands after their own names " (Ps. lxix. 6, 11), hoping thus for a sort of immortality. In scathing language St. James, dealing with those who thus delude themselves, describes how false their hope is : " Your gold and your silver is cankered ; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as if it were fire. Ye have heaped treasures together for the last days " (Jas. i. 3). Were a modern writer to write thus, he would be counted extreme.

In commercial dealings anything save altruism prevails. " Business is business " is the formula adopted ; and " every man for himself " is the rule. In business a man is not condemned, but is not infrequently counted clever if he can overreach his neighbours. Unlimited competition is both defended and commended. It may be ruthless and without heart ; it may issue in ill-remunerated service and consequent poverty. But who cares for the pinching poverty of the tens of thousands of the poor if the few grow enormously rich ?

3. Society at present is, therefore, far from being a reflection of the spirit of the Apostle's words. It cannot, even on the most charitable construction, be described in terms of the principle which he states and enforces; for it is blotted and blurred by man's inhumanity to man. Society is literally burdened with social evils. The clamant cry of the poor, and their loud demand for justice, are heard on all sides. The social evils of the day do not require description. They are painfully present everywhere; and they are only too well known.

IV

Instead, therefore, of dwelling upon the disheartening spectacle which society presents, it will serve a useful purpose if now, in view of what has been ascertained, a detailed attempt be made to justify and also to enforce altruism. This can be done if close attention be directed, first, to the philosophy which defends the present social order, and next, to the Christian altruism which is the solvent of social evils. For society is not a haphazard product. Principles have been in operation making it what it is, and giving to it its present features. Ideas always precede practice.

Now, it is historically accurate to say that the great majority of the exponents of moral life have attempted to justify the present social order of which the social evils of the day are products. Witness the historical evidence of this attempt. When men first turned their attention to moral questions a school was early formed which proclaimed *pleasure* and personal gains to be the test of moral actions. With very remarkable persistence this school has continued to the present day. Its members in the past have maintained, and at the present time still hold, that the only defensible rule of conduct is the seeking of pleasure, *hedonism*, or happiness, *eudæmonism*, along the line of least resistance. This school, it is well known, has within recent years been greatly discredited. Hobbes

and Bentham, Mill and Spencer, have largely lost their vogue. But under a new name the School has reappeared. It designates itself *pragmatism*, or *humanism*. The late Professor William James preferred the former, and Professor Schiller adopts the latter name. The term by which it is designated is, however, of little importance. It is more significant to observe that both deny all truth and reality save that which has "a meaning" and is "workable." Utility is, therefore, still offered as the only valid test of moral actions; it claims also to lay deep and sure the foundations of individualism.

But moral ideas and the moral world cannot be interpreted in terms of pleasure, happiness, or utility. For what is the testimony of history? Plato clearly perceived and exposed the impossibility of explaining the moral world by *pleasure*. He substituted for it his doctrine of Ideas, and outlined an idealism beautiful in its grand transcendentalism. St. Paul, enjoying clearer light, because he stood in the presence of Christ, recognised the same impossibility, and in its stead described an ideal at once transcendent and immanent, dealing with the highest truths of spirit, and also insisting upon righteousness and love, humility and self-sacrifice, as factors which directly make for the transformation and elevation of society. In recent times, from Hegel to Caird, there has been a constant succession of teachers who have insisted upon the moral ideal. Without exception these all maintain that this ideal can only be reached through service. Each individual, they teach, finds in the lives of his fellows, and in social relationships, the conditions under which he can attain to self-realisation; and this is reached according as he lives not unto himself.

The two Schools, the altruistic and egoistic, have for a long time been, and still are, in conflict. So intense, indeed, is their opposition, that all moral and social Movements reflect the influence of the struggle between them. It may seem to take one far away from the solution of present-day questions even to advert to these Movements.

But their history is instructive; besides, the application of the scientific spirit necessitates an endeavour to trace these Movements. The present is best read in the light of the teachings of the past.

When one, therefore, watches the development of efforts towards moral and social betterment, one's attention is first directed to Rationalism which enthroned Reason, and found in it alone the source of truth. But Rationalism, rightly understood and full justice being done to it, was on its ethical side a strong protest against *pleasure* as the rule of conduct. So far it had a good element; but men in their quest for truth and reality could not rest satisfied with intellectualism. Accordingly, Schleiermacher and Goethe dealt it an effective blow. Romanticism, therefore, took its place, and asserted claims of the highest order. For a time Romanticism held sway, and glorified the individual. Again, however, a revolt was led against it, and Positivism reigned for a brief period. Positivism derived its strength chiefly from its insistence upon altruism; but its pontifical reading of human progress through the three defined stages—*superstition, ecclesiasticism,* and *positivism*—and its elimination of the supernatural, deprived it of followers. Ritschlianism, with its postulate that belief in God is a necessity if man is to gain the victory over the world, led another revolt, and found in social life the realisation of a true humanism.

Then followed Pragmatism, first introduced as a new interpretation of moral life by Mr. C. S. Peirce in the *Popular Science Monthly,* in January 1878, and twenty years later elaborated by Professor James.[1] It is said to have "created an unparalleled disturbance in the circle of professional philosophers"; and it is further claimed for pragmatism that it has rendered effete all other interpretations of intellectual and moral life. As a Movement it may be at once conceded that Pragmatism

[1] *Vide* Professor James's pamphlet *Philosophic Conceptions and Practical Results*; also his *Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy.* Longmans, 1897.

has rendered good service by directing attention to the actual conditions, hardships, petty cares, and great crises under which human life is passed ; but as a theory it is, as Mr. Bradley rightly affirms, only utility in another form.

But an account of the Movements which reflect the contest ever going on between altruism and egoism would be incomplete were a brief reference not made to Socialism. It is much before the public mind as a theory and a practice. It is essentially an economic Movement, but it also claims to be an interpretation of social life. It has a strong passion for social betterment, and its vitality is derived from altruism, on which it bases itself. But its insistence upon the " economic " as that in terms of which history, and even life itself, must be interpreted, has largely destroyed the beautiful idealism of its earlier exponents, while its weakness, one might almost say its contracted outlook, lies in its neglect of ethics, and of man's profound spiritual needs. A theory of life which leaves the moral and spiritual out of account is doomed to failure.

Now, all these Movements, when thoroughly investigated, bear witness to the preference which is given either to altruism or egoism. They have other features and characteristics, but if one penetrates deep enough one sees either altruism or egoism imparting to them whatever energy they display ; and they are all brought to the test of experience where their validity or lack of it is exhibited. For social life is the sphere in which they are tried. Social life is, indeed, the reflection of all that is attempted and done in the name of the one or the other.

History leaves no room for doubt as to which of them has most extensively prevailed. Individualism always has been, and still is, the expression of egoism. Individualism, which justifies every man fighting in his own interests to the neglect of the interests of others, has long ruled with almost supreme sway. Writing before the Statute Book had the recent socialistic Acts inscribed upon it, such as Old Age Pensions and super-taxation, Dr. Sidgwick

says, " The legislation of modern civilised communities is, in the main, framed on an individualistic basis." [1] In commerce the same principle has prevailed. " The market price of labour," without regard to the value of the work done, has regulated remuneration of service. Trades Unionism is a quite modern Movement, and has only slightly modified the operations of this indefensible and unchristian principle of payment for work done. It is, indeed, essentially unchristian, since service is not estimated at its worth, but is bought at the lowest possible price.

There are to-day, however, many signs that utility as a moral theory, and the individualism based upon it, are slowly but surely giving way to a higher principle, and to better practice. For a correct reading of the great Movements just briefly described supplies evidence that as the one succeeds the other, theory and practice are seen to be more and more tending towards altruism. Recent legislation, enacted with the consent of the great majority of the people, supplies abundant proof of that to which the history of these Movements witnesses. Again, the many societies which have within recent times been formed, and in which " mutual aid " is a distinguishing note, derive their vitality from altruism, and bear testimony to its growing influence.

But still further evidence of the trend of altruism lies to hand. For the philosopher of the school and the man in the street are gradually approximating to the position defined by St. Paul when he said that " none of us liveth to himself " and also to the economic condition which he described when he wrote, " I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened : but by an equality that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want ; that there may be equality."

Thinkers to-day who deal with moral life are not satisfied unless, after indulging in long philosophic discussions, they also attempt a solution of social evils. The majority

[1] *The Elements of Politics*, p. 39.

of them, dissatisfied with the theory of utility and its implications, and compelled by the hard facts of daily life to search for a truer ethic, find it in an idealism tempered by experience. They have pointed out the too exclusive claims which the earlier exponents of idealism urged. They now declare for a principle deeper than all differences—one, too, which reconciles the severe antinomies of social life. They perceive its operations in all strivings for a worthy *end* in the endeavour to attain which one, they maintain, in seeking the good of others, thereby finds one's own. This is, at once, the explanation and also the vindication of altruism.

V

Now, the Church, which stands for brotherliness, cannot, unless at a great cost, be indifferent to the issues of all these Movements. History, especially the history of thought and endeavours to improve social relationship, is her instructor. She rightly turns to Revelation for chief guidance; but the Divine Purpose which is the burden of Revelation is evolved through human experience of thought and work; and to history's teachings she cannot without great loss turn a deaf ear. To-day, indeed, a splendid opportunity is presented to her. The faithful prosecution of her high mission, and the well-being of society, depend upon the use which she may make of it.

But special care must be taken as to how she begins and next proceeds to discharge her great task. The history of the Movements reviewed teaches nothing else more distinctly than the need to do justice alike to the individual and to society. The Movements themselves oscillated from the one extreme to the other, according as undue stress was laid upon individualism or altruism. The Church must guard against this danger. She must do full justice to and, indeed, begin with the individual. Personality and initiative always count.

But the Church is not without a safeguard. Her Lord has set her an example, and His method must be followed. He dealt with the individual, and the individual's responsibility. He called upon each person, as such, to respond to His claims. The course of duty is, therefore, plain. Each person must be taught to make a personal effort to apprehend truth. One by one men enter into the Kingdom of God; and within the Kingdom individuality never ceases to carry with it both worth and responsibility. The value of each individual is, indeed, as Christ taught, infinite; and personal service and devotion to all that is good, pure, and noble are great moral necessities.

But in Christ's teachings there is nothing plainer than that the redeemed individual is a member of a new social order, and must render social service. He is in and is a member of the Kingdom respecting which our Lord had much to say. For everywhere, in city and village, Christ spoke of the Kingdom, and urged men to enter into it by a personal trust in Himself. Almost all His parables illustrate aspects of it. The Sermon on the Mount is "the manifesto of the Kingdom"; and in that Sermon He taught that the conduct of all who claim a place in the Kingdom must excel the conduct of the typical representatives of the present social order. Zeal for good work, and altruistic actions, must distinguish all who are in the Kingdom. That is the element of their lives. It is the duty to which they are called, and the motive to its discharge is ever devotion to the will of God, for "none of us liveth to himself," but unto God.

When these sacred duties, with their high ideals, are translated into everyday life, they mean, among other things, that Christian people must develop a Christian conscience in relation to all social obligations, and also with respect to all things which hinder the progress of the Kingdom of God. This double task is, indeed, one of the urgent necessities of the present day. It is a task which is laid upon the Church. It is her duty to develop a powerful Christian public conscience in relation to all

social evils. The individual alone cannot discharge this obligation. Many attempts have been made, but they have necessarily failed; for no individual, no matter how earnest and well-informed he may be, can deal effectively with all the social evils of the day and make an authoritative pronouncement upon them.

It is the province of the Church to discharge these tasks. Already endeavours have been made informally to develop what has been termed "a Nonconformist conscience" in relation to gambling and other social evils. But something more on a far wider scale is an urgent necessity. The whole Church of Christ must labour for the betterment of the entire social life. The whole Church is pledged to altruistic action. Sect distinctions vanish in presence of the social evils of the day. There is common ground on which all can stand without sacrificing any ecclesiastical or theological principle; and this, therefore, gives to the duty an inviting as well as an urgent aspect.

But the Church hesitates. There are, however, signs, not a few, that she is awakening to a sense of her duty. Many of her prominent members are calling loudly to her to display a worthy courage, and give an authoritative pronouncement upon social life. Addressing an audience in St. Paul's Chapel House a few years ago, Bishop Gore said, "The function of the Church in moral legislation for its members has been lamentably obscured," and he summoned the Church to her duty by declaring that "we must get a genuine Christian people together to think out for themselves, and formulate for their guidance, the moral law of Christianity, as applied to modern conditions." This, he urged them to do as members of the Church in their collective capacity; and he added, "When this is done a clear Christian opinion will form itself." Professor Simpson, to take another illustration of the efforts made to rouse the Church to an adequate discharge of her duty, addressing the students of New College, Edinburgh, in October 1908, was permitted to say, without protest from any of his colleagues that "much of the social

distress of the day arose from social wrongs in monopolies of land and money, and machinery, and capital of other kinds. It is these," he urged, " that have to be righted " ; but he was obliged to confess that " it is just here that the Church has done so little."

The Church dare not, however, longer rest satisfied with the present conditions under which tens of thousands of the poor pass their weary lives. She must cast aside her hesitation, and make authoritative pronouncement upon social duties and social evils. She is urged to-day to give her members guidance by the spirit of the times, by the teachings of history as seen in the great Movements of the past and present, by the concrete needs of the suffering poor, and above all, by the sacred Commission entrusted to her.

A wide field of service lies before the Church. She can no longer complain that her task is too indefinite. She cannot excuse herself on the ground that it is too delicate, and that its discharge would offend some of her members. The truth is that society is literally burdened with social evils which cry out for a remedy. The Church cannot turn a deaf ear to the cry without being untrue to her mission. She has a message which strikes at the root of the false economic practices of the day ; and she must declare her message without regard to what may be said by some of her members who hesitate, or pretend to fear that her great spiritual mission would suffer.

When the Church sets herself to the urgent and specific social duty which is imposed upon her, she will be obliged to make pronouncements, clear and definite, upon such questions as a living and liberal wage, how money is earned and spent, the stewardship of wealth in the interest of the common good of all, how people are housed, social responsibility, and, indeed, upon all that makes for the strength and beauty of social life.

And the great ruling and guiding principle which she must obey in making her pronouncements is that affirmed by the Apostle and approved by philosophy, that no man

lives to himself; that his life is given to him, not for a selfish end, but to be spent in service; and that all his possessions must be held as a sacred trust to be used in the interests and for the good of all. A high ideal! Granted; but it is only as this ideal is pursued that self-realisation is attained and society is elevated. This altruism, distinctly and pre-eminently Christian, is at once a possibility and a necessity. The Church's duty is to enforce it, and persuade her members to obey its dictates. She must be true to her sacred mission, and this she can only be according as she uses rightly her rich heritage of truth, and seeks the redemption and moral perfection of the individual, that he, in turn, may spend his life in the service of his fellows, and thereby find it again in fullest measure in a regenerated, purified, and elevated society.

It is not now, in view of what has been stated, too much to say that the Christian Faith throws as much light upon social life and its problems as it does upon the perplexing questions of philosophy. It thus proves itself intensely human.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGION AND ITS DEVELOPMENT AND EXTENSION

I

To speak of religion and its extension may seem a contradiction of the facts of history; for religion, whether it takes a nature-form or that of the highest spirituality, is found wherever man dwells. There is, as has already been shown, no tribe or people so far down in the social scale as to be without some form of religion. It may be fetichism, and assume one of the many aspects of polytheism. Among civilised communities it may be either pantheistic or monotheistic. It covers the entire human field. It claims attention everywhere; and whatever distinctive qualifying term may be applied to it, religion ranges from the experience of terror and awe of fetichism to the reverent worship and loving service of God, who has made Himself known through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Since, then, religion already obtains everywhere, in what legitimate sense can one speak of its extension? The distinctions as to its many forms, just indicated, are in themselves a justification of the title given to this chapter; for manifestly the lower forms of religion, with their terrors and lack of freedom, with their darkened outlook and poor civilisation, cannot satisfy anyone. The highest expression of the religious spirit claims extension on the grounds of its own merits and the lasting benefits which it confers. Besides, every informed person recognises that there is a development of religion. Whatever its

starting-point, religion is a distinctly progressive movement. It proceeds from less to fuller and clearer light.

Apart from Revelation, as has been already shown, philosophy has from its own inception ever striven after a unity in all thought and things, and has ultimately reached the conclusion that there is one eternal Source whence come all life and light. Psychology, a department of philosophy, may yet be unable to speak in unquestioning terms respecting God, but none the less does the moral philosopher, whose function it is to explain the moral order of the universe, speak in final words respecting the moral law as the expression of the one supreme Will. It is too late in the day to attempt to resolve morals into *pleasure* or *utility*. They have their origin in the constitution of man's being, and are only rightly interpreted in terms of the supreme *end* of his life. Variability of moral judgments prevails, but moral distinctions are reconciled by a unity deeper than any differences; and this unity is to philosophy the key which unlocks the mysteries of the moral life.

Revelation confirms the testimony of philosophy. It does, indeed, much more, but it is in harmony with reason and instinct; it attests man's deeper moral intuitions; and it allies itself with philosophy in recognising that religion develops from stage to stage. It assumes that religion is common to man; and that religion tells upon the culture of the soul by bringing new ideas to bear upon it, and also tells, too, upon all institutions and customs by moulding them through the influence of its spirit.

II

There is, then, a development of religion. This development can be traced from stage to stage. Man cannot be satisfied with fetich worship. He cannot rest content with any form of polytheism and its contending gods. He needs One whose revealed will and manifest actions

explain the diversities and antinomies of life. His soul cries out for God, the living God (Ps. xlii. 2). The experience of Israel's poet-King is repeated everywhere; and it is only through a personal trust in a personal God that man finds satisfaction and repose.

As to the form of the religious development, it would be contrary to the witness of history to affirm that the development begins with fetichism, polytheism, pantheism, or henotheism. History offers no such witness. Primitive man has left no historical records behind him, and to educe a theory, as the author of *The Golden Bough* so often does, from customs which now lie in the distant past is little else than guesswork. The present savage life is an uncertain parallel to what may have obtained among primitive men, while ancient mythologies are the products of those who were dominated by superstition, and are almost useless.

When history's page was first written it tells a different story. It speaks of man as in a more or less patriarchal state,[1] and if the present savage life be examined it shows that the customs of savages "were often far more artificial and complicated than they appeared at first," "and that there has been as much progression and retrogression in their historical development as in that of most civilised races."[2]

Anthropologists are acutely divided in opinion respecting what may be taken as the *origin* of the historical development of religion. Finality of judgment on this much-disputed question seems impossible. Comte is all for fetichism, Spencer for belief in ghosts, Heine for Polytheism, Max Müller for Henotheism, Edward Caird for Pantheism, and Rawlinson for Monotheism. But this, at least, is recognised by all, that given a low form of religion, man gradually rises to truer and loftier expressions of the religious spirit.

The acknowledgment of this development does not,

[1] See Sir Henry Maine's *Ancient Law*, p. 122.
[2] See Max Müller's *Anthropological Religion*, p. 150.

however, necessarily imply that Christianity is a resultant of a long series of religions. It has nothing in common with fetichism or polytheism. It has an historical development which is *sui generis*. It takes account of what is true in Judaism, but is entirely different in spirit from the Mosaic economy. In the Old and New Testaments there is the history of God's redemptive Purpose; but in the New the Purpose is fully revealed. The development of the purer religious ideas in the Old comes to flower and fruit in the New.

The religious experience described in the Gospels and Epistles is accordingly of the highest kind. It has not been surpassed by anyone at any time during the nineteen hundred years which have elapsed since that experience was a part of man's life. This is one of the most remarkable features of the uniqueness and finality of Christianity. Many men, devout and learned, have lived during the last nineteen centuries; but the religious experience of the most saintly of them does not contain anything that excels the religious experience described in the New Testament. The glad tidings of the Kingdom of God is thus from experience shown to be the mightiest and most wholesome influence which plays upon man's life and moulds society.

III

Christianity, therefore, claims extension on its own merits. One reason, perhaps, why even so few Christian people make strenuous and self-denying endeavours to send "the Gospel of the grace of God" to the most distant parts of the world is that the gracious power of the Christian religion is not realised. As experience on an extended scale clearly shows, it is able to lift up and civilise the most degraded; but this is neither fully recognised nor even adequately perceived. To see the need for the Gospel of God's grace at home, and to make the Church an effective agency for the removal of the evils which lie at one's own door, is good; but the wide world

has its claims. Besides, interest in what is done at home is deepened when the obligation to enlighten the dark places of the earth is discharged.

It should never be forgotten that the Lord Jesus Christ waits to see His Church evangelising every province, and kingdom, and empire. He has not in vain entrusted her with a great Commission. In His public teachings He made nothing else clearer than that He expects redeemed men and women to put forth enlightened energy for the transformation, and the elevation of the entire race.

To some this may seem an idle dream, while to others it may appear an unrealisable ideal, fit only to be the subject of the airy flights of the impracticable preacher. But unless the profound words of Christ be robbed of their meaning, and the entire Divine redemptive Purpose be denied, the obligation which rests upon every member of the Church to make known to all men the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God is as binding and as sacred as it was when Christ first uttered the words which embody it. The task is urgent to-day, and it is of the most stupendous order. But it is not to be attempted by the Church in her own strength and wisdom alone. God works on the hearts of those who serve Him. He enlightens and inspires them, and He also gives them an ever clearer and clearer vision of what they should attempt in His name and for His sake. They must, however, be willing agents; for He cannot co-operate with them against their will. But if their wills be surrendered to Him, He works in them "to will and to do," while at the same time they must try to realise what can be accomplished, and what is expected at their hands.

The wide world is the field and sphere within which effect must be given to the great Commission entrusted by Christ to His Church. The world is ever increasing in numbers, and this demands new efforts. The population of the world at the beginning of the Christian era is computed to have been one hundred and seventy millions. According to the latest estimates to-day it is one billion,

six hundred and forty-six millions, four hundred and ninety-one thousand, more than half of which is ruled by professedly Christian Powers, and therefore presumably accessible to Christian enterprise.

IV

But the Church is making well-marked progress. If India, one of the largest fields of missionary work, be taken, it will be seen that the advance is quite definite; for according to the census of 1901 there were 2,923,421 Christians in India, while the census of 1911 shows that there are 3,876,421 that profess the Christian faith, showing an increase of 32·24 per cent.

Or, if another point of view be selected, the progress appears even more distinct. Take the entire population of India. The census of 1901 gives the number as 294,361,056, while that of 1911 returns 313,523,981. Thus, during this decade the population of India increased by 6·57 per cent., but, as just stated, during the same period the Christians increased by 32·24 per cent.

One further instance of progress may be cited. In the statistical Atlas of Christian Missions, issued by the Committee of the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910, and which deals with all recent converts to Christianity who are still alive, it is stated "that the Committee are of the opinion, on the basis of its own compilation gathered from latest sources, that the total fruitage of the Christian Missions represented by *living* converts Christianised from non-Christian peoples approaches twenty-one millions."

But remarkable and encouraging as the work may be which has been accomplished, it is still very far from all that should be attempted and done. It is computed, for instance, that even in the best organised Churches, in which also missionary enterprise is conspicuous, only one-third of their members give contributions for the spread of the Gospel in heathen lands, and that in

the least active Churches only a tenth seem to care for the prosperity of missionary endeavours. Who are the two-thirds in well-organised Churches, and the nine-tenths in the indifferently organised congregations, who make no contributions is a serious question for each member of the Christian Church.

In view of the great missionary Commission entrusted to the Church it cannot be argued that missions are unnecessary. Whoever refuses to assist them is up against Christ's own command; and stated in simple terms the refusal means that there are those who can take from His gracious hands the priceless gifts of forgiveness and eternal life and yet be so devoid of gratitude as to go out from His presence indifferent to His command. Such conduct spells ingratitude.

Nor can it be contended that because some allege missions are badly conducted, and produce indifferent results, members of the Church are excused if they take no interest in them. This allegation is not infrequently made by civilians who have lived in foreign lands. These say that they have never seen any good done by Christian missions. The same men see little good in anything which the Church is effecting at home. They are not familiar with the Church's work either at home or abroad, and their judgment, wanting in information, carries with it little weight. What they, therefore, allege cannot be an excuse for indifference to our Lord's command that the glad tidings of His Kingdom must be made known to all men of every race and clime.

Fortunately evidence is at hand as to the good work done by Christian Missions. It is the testimony of men like Carey and Duff, Chalmers of New Guinea, and Paton of the New Hebrides, who spent their lives in foreign mission service, that no work excels theirs in fruitfulness, or interest, or worth.

But, further, it is on all sides recognised that the missionary opens up the way for civilisation. Witness David Livingstone, and the splendid service which he

rendered. This mission service is a distinctive part of the Church's work ; and it is her legitimately proud boast that she civilises the heathen lands within which she carries on her operations. The missionary settles down to his arduous task. He goes where the trader will not think of entering ; and he thus prepares the way for civilising influences telling upon a large scale. This, after all, is just what might be anticipated, for Christianity is essentially a saving, civilising message to the whole world.

V

But, in addition, if the chief notes of Christianity be examined, convincing evidence is at once forthcoming as to the high character of the work which Christian Missions effect. *First,* it is *spiritual.* It appeals to *spirit* and carries with it an elevating influence. It evokes what is most essential in man's life ; and while laying little stress upon forms, it satisfies what is deepest in human needs.

Second, it is *social.* No careful student can fail to see the supreme value which it sets upon the individual life ; but the individual is not an end to himself. He is redeemed in order that he may be a member of a redeemed society. The very idea of " a Kingdom of the Son of Man " implies social privileges and social duties. Within the Kingdom no man lives unto himself ; he serves his fellows and thereby lives unto the glory of God.

Third, it is *universal, absolute,* and therefore aggressive. It is the saving message of God to man in all lands. It claims man's whole energies and service. It does not allow a divided heart. God or Mammon are its alternatives. A choice must be made, and if Christianity be accepted neither is a competitor admissible nor a compromise possible. Those who accept it cannot sit still and be content with the meagre agencies employed to extend the Gospel. Either personally they must carry the tidings of the Kingdom to the most distant parts of

the earth, or by their offerings support those who go in their stead.

An escape from this obligation, imposed by the Master Himself, is impossible. Since these notes and qualities characterise Christianity, it proves itself a world-wide message and a wholesome purifying power. It makes for the good of men wherever it is received, and is, therefore, well-attested.

In the prosecution of her missionary task the Church presents a long and instructive history; but perhaps there is nothing more interesting in that history than the missionary spirit of the operations of which it gives a record. The Old Testament Church is linked on to the New Testament Church by the missionary spirit. Abraham was the first missionary of the Old, and Paul the first of the New. Both travelled far and were the bearers of a definite Faith. From the first, too, a great world-wide religion was contemplated. In these days, when many efforts are made to explain the origin of the conception of a universal brotherhood, it makes one pause and reflect when it is recalled that of Abraham it is said "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3). Search is made in vain in ancient history to discover anything like this world-wide conception. Buddha held and taught the equality and brotherhood of men. He also inculcated a catholic philanthropy. He lived, however, so late as the fifth century B.C., and therefore at a time not only long after the time of Abraham, but also when ideas of universal brotherhood could have found their way through the Hebrew religion to distant lands. The Greeks limited duties and privileges to citizens of the State. The Stoics entertained, it is true, universal ideas of man and his duties; but the Stoics flourished at a comparatively late period. No one else so early as the time of Abraham seems even to have dreamed of mankind united by common ties and interests.

A universal religion binding men together is thus found in the Old Testament. The prophets of Israel gave it

not only embodiment, but also expression in the most beautiful words. "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same *My Name* shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto *My Name*, and a pure offering; for *My Name* shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 11). "I will pour out *My Spirit* upon all flesh" (Joel ii. 28) is the gracious message which Joel was commanded to deliver; and when the day of Pentecost came this prophecy received a literal fulfilment; for men of many nations were present at Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came in power (Acts ii. 1–12).

This note of universality is remarkable. As just stated, it is found nowhere else save in the Hebrew writings; and it can only be explained when one takes into account the character and purpose of Revelation. One may be pardoned for dwelling upon this "note," and also for insisting that here is found the origin of ideas of a universal religion and the explanation of the conception of brotherhood which is now entertained by many. Only to this source can the conception be traced; and it may be added that the frank admission of its origin would do much to clear the air in these days, when inquiries are made respecting the first intimation and the subsequent development of ideas of universal obligation, rights, and privileges.

VI

The great Commission which our Lord gave to His disciples was the confirmation of what the prophets had foretold. St. Matthew (xxviii. 19–20) and St. Mark (xvi. 15) give the terms of the Commission. The Apostles clearly apprehended the mission with which they were entrusted; and they all became great missionaries. The subsequent history of the Church witnesses to her missionary character. In her best and most active days she sent her agents everywhere.

The first centuries are crowded with records of great

missionary journeyings. Ten terrible persecutions, beginning with Nero in A.D. 64 and ending with Diocletian in 303 swept over the Church; but these had, among other things, the definite effect of making the Church more and more missionary in spirit from the time when Nero struck the first blow until the day in 311 when Constantine recognised the Church and protected her with his imperial forces. It is uncertain whether he himself ever accepted the Christian Faith; but he gave to the Church a civil establishment; he abolished all gladiatorial shows and forbade Sabbath work. He encouraged the young to attend public worship; and in 325 he summoned the great Church Council of Nicea which framed the famous Nicene Creed, which since then till the present time has had a prominent place in the doctrinal symbols of the Church and has also given colour and form to all subsequent creeds.

From the earlier part of the fourth century to the close of the fifth the Church gave herself to the development of doctrines, and was often distracted by bitter theological controversies. But even during this period, under the new conditions which Constantine's acknowledgment and defence of the Church created, she was still missionary both in spirit and action. Chrysostom (347–407) carried on the work which Ulfilas (318–388), the Apostle of the Goths, had begun. He founded a missionary college in Constantinople from which radiated Christian influences that told upon the northern races, and also upon Phœnicia and Persia. But he was only one of many who attempted the same kind of work. Honoratus, for instance, between the years 410–429, made the Lerins Islands the centre of missionary enterprise. These Islands have been called the Iona of the Gallican Church, and from them went forth men, like Hilary of Arles, who did much to Christianise Europe.

When the period known as the Dark Ages began, the missionary spirit of the Church was far from being suppressed. Our own Western Islands became the fruitful

field of missionary enterprise. St. Ninian, who is the first well-known missionary in the Scottish Church, and who finished his labours in 432, St. Patrick (395–493), St. Columba (521–597), St. Kentigern, who is perhaps better known as St. Mungo (518–603), St. Augustine (d. 604), who was sent by Pope Gregory I in 596 to evangelise pagan England, and who was the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and St. Cuthbert (603–687), the Scottish shepherd, who became the Apostle of the people of Northumbria, are names which stand for missionary enterprise; and much of the religious and civil privileges now enjoyed are due to the devoted labours of these men.

During the whole of the Middle Ages there were many missionaries in other lands whose names shine illustrious amidst an intense religious darkness. Prominent among these are Methodius and Cyrillus in the ninth century, Adalbert of Prussia in the tenth century, and Otto of Bamberg in the twelfth century, Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), who sent his monks on missionary service all over the West, while he himself dared the task of evangelising the Saracen hosts, and Raimund Lull (1236–1315), the first missionary to the Mohammedans, whose experimental religious books rank with those of St. Augustine of Hippo and John Bunyan, and who, it has been said, might have anticipated by seven centuries the work of William Carey in India, had his followers supported him. He was also the actual prototype of David Livingstone in Africa.

Before the Reformation Wiclif and Hus, and during that great religious renaissance Luther and Knox, were all interested in the spread of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, though their missionary efforts were few and limited. Spener, Zinzendorf, and Francke, perhaps less well-known names, stood for piety and aggressive Christian work. The famous Moravian Mission, for instance, owe much to them, and to-day the whole Christian Church is their debtor.

In another field, George Fox, the founder of the Society

of Friends, William Penn and his work among the Indians, the Pilgrim Fathers and the hardships which they endured in the interests of religious freedom, are names round which cluster sacred and inspiring associations. In the great mission-field of India, Friedrich Schwartz, who studied under Francke and was the first to establish Christian vernacular schools in India; William Carey, shoemaker and Oriental scholar, who was the first foreign missionary whom England sent out in modern times; Dr. Alexander Duff, the first missionary from the Scottish Church, who by his lifelong service set an example which has induced many in recent times to give themselves to the foreign mission-field; and Dr. Thomas Smith, who was a great intellectual as well as a strong religious influence in Indian missions, and who was also the founder of the Zenana system, which has done so much for the women of India—these devoted men may be said to have opened up that vast country to the Christian Faith, while their names and the service which they rendered form a fitting introduction to the labours of the missionaries, foreign and native, who are at the present time engaged in mission work.

This brief historical review makes it quite plain that all these men stood for a religion which is spiritual, moral, and universal. It also shows that they represented mental and moral enlightenment, and were the pioneers of civilisation. In many instances they were men not only of singular devotion, but of great literary gifts. The rendering of the Scriptures into hundreds of tongues has done for these lands, in which translations have been made, a service not unlike that which Luther did for the German and the scholars of King James for the English language.

But the fruits of the labours of these men cannot be detailed. History witnesses to them, and to-day they are being enjoyed by countless people. These men lived and gave their willing service for the extension of the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, and they set a noble

example the influence of which is ever operating. Even now that influence is felt, and at the present time the question which their example presents is, Who will join their ranks and will endeavour with heroic zeal and enlightened service to send the elevating and saving message of the Christian Faith to lands where it is as yet unknown? It is at once the duty and privilege of all who bear the Christian name to take into the court of conscience the Master's great Commission to His Church, and say what they are doing towards its fulfilment. This obligation cannot be neglected with impunity; this privilege cannot be left unused without loss. On its own merits the Christian religion appeals for extension, while the lasting benefits it confers are its justification and commendation.

CHAPTER XIV

RELIGION AND ITS ORGANISATION

I

The religious spirit must have outward embodiment and an external expression. This is its necessity, as it is that of all ideas, projects, and schemes, be they social or political. When men have a common object in view, they combine and organise themselves in order to attain it. Hence the innumerable "societies" which exist. Organisation is thus a necessity. It may serve its purpose and be highly useful; but as history has so often shown, it may continue to exist as an empty form when the spirit or ideas which called it into being have been discarded. This, therefore, at the outset sounds its own note of warning. Too much importance should not be attached to organisation, as such, but still it has its own rightful place and definite use, only care must always be taken that organisation, even of the most perfect and necessary kind, be not substituted for the spirit of which it is merely the medium and agent.

The history of religion shows that none of the great religions of the world have escaped divisions on questions more often of organisation than even of doctrine. Buddhism was in its inception a protest against the arrogance of the priesthood, and the influence of the Caste of Brahmanism; but after the death of its founder Buddhism itself suffered from divisions. Council was divided against council, and ultimately even the Brahmans adopted Buddha as an incarnation of Vishnu, and thereby induced many to return to the ancient faith. Mohammedanism,

again, was soon acutely divided by the contentions of the Shiites and Sunnites. Resort was often made to the sword, and the party strongest in military power generally prevailed. The history of Islam is, indeed, one of divisions which persist to the present day.

Christianity is no exception to this common experience. There is all the difference which language can indicate between the primitive organisation of the Church in the days of the Apostles and the elaborated hierarchy of which the writings of St. Cyprian (200–258) form a perfect storehouse, greatly treasured by the Roman Catholic Church. Or, if an earlier period than the first half of the third century be taken, say that of the publication of the Didaché, which Bishop Lightfoot places at the close of the first century, already a wide departure is made from the Church organisation of St. Paul's time. The letters of Ignatius (*circa* 110) still more plainly show what changes had taken place. But these changes were not effected without controversy. They are witnesses to acute divisions, which unfortunately have prevailed throughout the whole history of the Christian Church.

II

At the inception of the New Testament Church her organisation was of the simplest kind. The Apostles did not even at first break away from the Temple Worship; for "Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer" (Acts iii. 1), manifestly to engage in worship; but as time went on and the Church grew in numbers separate places for prayer and Christian teaching became a necessity. Organisation in the conduct of worship in such places was also needful so that all things might be done "decently and in order." What, then, more natural than that the new Christian Society should adopt, with perhaps some modifications, the organisation which obtained in all the Synagogues? A body of elders superintended the Jewish worship, and a similar body

seems at once to have been appointed by Christian congregations. The term "Elder" was well known to Jewish Christians, but perhaps not as well to Gentile converts. Another word which connoted the same office was, however, quite familiar to them, that of "Bishop," who in the secular societies of the day was a superintendent and was invested with certain administrative powers. This term, as well as that of "Elder" was applied to those who were authorised by the Church to care for all that pertained to the social, moral, and spiritual interests of her members.

Confirmation of this use of those two words is given in historical detail by Dr. Hatch in his *Organisation of the Early Christian Churches*,[1] and in his work *The Christian Ecclesia*. It is sanctioned by what is found in the Epistles of St. Paul, who, when writing to Jewish Christians, almost invariably uses the term "Elder," while when writing to Gentile Christians he uses the word "Bishop," but he sometimes applies the two terms to the same person; and this gives prominence to a now widely recognised distinguishing note of the organisation of the primitive Church, that men in office, whether elder or bishop, discharged the same functions.

The first intimation in the New Testament of offices, and therefore of a certain form of organisation, is the calling of the Apostles, who were specially trained by our Lord Himself for the great work which lay before them. They subsequently held a distinct and highly honoured place in the Christian Church; they were the authority to which members of the Church looked for guidance.

The appointment of the Seventy followed the calling of the Twelve. They were charged with a special mission, which was to announce the Kingdom of God. The Master "sent them two and two before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come." From these words it would seem as if their mission may have lasted for some time; but since no further mention is made

[1] See especially his Note, p. 37.

of them after their return, which is recorded in Luke x. 17, and as the other Synoptics make no reference to them, it may be concluded that their mission and office were temporary. The names of these men are quite unknown, and though tradition, as usual, has much to say about them, Eusebius confesses that he could not ascertain anything concerning them beyond what Luke records.[1]

That our Lord had a wider circle of followers than the Twelve and the Seventy is clearly intimated. In St. John's Gospel vi. 66, in Acts i. 15–26, and in 1 Cor. xv. 6 definite reference is made to them; but our Lord did not call into existence any organisation unless those just mentioned. He left it to His followers to develop their own ecclesiastical polity. He dealt with spirit, and not forms, with the great truths of His Kingdom, and not hard and fast regulations. He knew that the glad tidings which He proclaimed would find a place in many hearts, and that those who received the Gospel would soon discover the most befitting organisation by means of which His Kingdom would be extended.

Christianity owes little of its progress to anything external; and from the first those who saw into its spirit sat loosely by forms. A correct reading of history, indeed, yields the most convincing evidence that Christianity can suit itself to almost any ecclesiastical organisation. Many have been adopted, ranging from monarchical episcopacy to the tribal organisation of the Columban Church and simple Congregationalism. Under all of them it has made progress.

III

This, however, does not mean that members of the Church are to be indifferent as to which ecclesiastical organisation will best promote devotion and provide conditions for the most useful service. Each must judge for himself respecting Church government and what Church organisation ministers to his growth. Different

[1] See Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, i. 12.

forms of Church service suit different people. It should, however, be observed that in no part of the New Testament is there an account given of an ecclesiastical polity. The Apostles detailed none. You search in vain through its pages for absolute and unquestioned authority on behalf of Episcopacy, Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism. All perhaps are there in embryo, but the New Testament does not contain such authority for any of them as would entitle members of one organisation to unchurch those of another, and to maintain that Christianity can only make progress through the form which they use. No impartial scholar to-day holds that monarchical episcopacy, or its extreme, simple Congregationalism, is explicitly enforced by the Apostles. Christianity's independence of any set form of organisation, indeed, differentiates it from all other religions; and in this also, one may, without presuming too much, say that evidence is found of the Divine Source whence it comes.

IV

After Pentecost, when the Church had greatly increased in numbers, an ecclesiastical organisation became urgently needful. The first reference to it, apart from the office of the Twelve Apostles, whose authority was already recognised, is the appointment of the Seven, of whom Stephen is one (Acts vi. 1–5). There are some scholars who see in this appointment the beginning of the Diaconate, while there are others who find in it the beginning of the Eldership. But in the New Testament the Seven are called neither deacons nor elders; and further, since there is no subsequent reference to them, it may be assumed that the Seven held only temporary office, which was called into existence to meet the passing need, created by the murmurings of certain Grecians "because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration." It is specially stated that the appointment was made for "this business"; and as showing that

the Seven were not called to exercise spiritual functions it is said of the Apostles, who appointed them, that they gave themselves "to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," while presumably the Seven were relieving distress and caring for all that pertained to the welfare of the members of the Church. All, indeed, that can be legitimately inferred from the narrative of the appointment of the Seven is that their office is only a prototype of that which obtains in some sections of the Presbyterian Church, where deacons are ordained, and set apart to look after the temporal concerns of the congregation.

In addition to the Apostles, definite reference is made in the New Testament to Prophets, Evangelists, Bishops, Elders, and Deacons. But it deserves to be specially noticed that almost all of the references to the offices which these held are incidental. In no place is there a detailed statement such as one would expect to find in a record of ecclesiastical organisation. It is not difficult to perceive the reason for the references being incidental. The New Testament writers were chiefly concerned with the growth of the Kingdom of God itself; and as the organisations with which Jewish Christians were familiar in their Synagogue, and Gentile Christians in their civic life, were taken over by the Apostles, and adapted to the work of the Church, reference to these organisations were naturally incidental. As already stated, Christianity from the first laid little stress upon forms. It used the organisation which was best suited for its expression and extension; but it should be carefully observed that the Apostles, having once adopted an acceptable and useful organisation, always insisted that due honour should be paid to those who were called to service in the Church, and that for their work's sake.

The Prophets are generally named next to the Apostles (1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iii. 5, iv. 11). They seem to have held an office which did not last beyond the second century. During the whole of the first century they occupied a well-recognised official position, but after the Church had

been widely established they disappeared. In the Acts (xi. 28, xxi. 10) prophecy in the sense of prediction appears to belong to their office; but their spiritual duties were those of ordaining men to special missions (Acts xiii. 1), preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and edifying, exhorting, and comforting the members of the Church (1 Cor. xiv. 3). In the Didaché reference is frequently made to the Prophets. They are spoken of as being held in the highest honour, and as occupying a position second only to that of the Apostles. When they were present at any assembly of Christians the Bishop or Elder acknowledged their authority, and gave place to them. They visited the Church and seem to have carried with them no letters of authentication; their actions were sufficient proof of their office. Their office, however, like that of the Seventy and the Seven, came to an end when the purpose for which it was called into existence had been achieved.

Evangelists occupied a quite definite position among Church agents. They were missionaries who travelled from place to place, and preached the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. They thus prepared the way for the settled pastor or teacher. The work of an Evangelist might be done by an Apostle. Paul is an example of one who perhaps excelled all others in doing evangelistic work; but the Evangelist's office was quite distinct from that of the Apostle. The Evangelist was not necessarily an apostle, or bishop, or deacon, but he might be any of these. The Evangelist's office, however, was separated from theirs, and seems to have continued as a definite agency for many centuries, for Eusebius in the third century speaks of "men who do the work of evangelists, leaving their homes to preach Christ, and deliver the written Gospels to those who were ignorant of the Faith." [1]

All Churches have still evangelists; but the office, as such, exists in few of them, and even where it is recognised

[1] *Historia Ecclesiastica*, iii. 37.

the same honour and importance are not attached to the office as the early Church gave to it. In this, therefore, a departure has been made from Apostolic practice; and it may be added, with great loss as far as the extension of the Kingdom of God is concerned; for, were the Churches of to-day wise, they would send their best men to the slums of great cities, and pay them the highest honour. They would also send evangelists to towns and villages and attach supreme importance to their work; but the humble evangelist's work does not seem to fit into a dignified hierarchy, and even Presbyterian organisation finds no place of honour for it. But as showing what value belongs *per se* to the office, it is named after those of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. iv. 11).

Pastors and teachers come next. Much has been written respecting their offices. It is not necessary to repeat what has already been often stated. It is perhaps enough to say that pastors and teachers have fixed spheres of work; that elders are definitely described as of two classes, rulers and teachers (Rom. xii. 8, 1 Cor. xii. 28, 1 Tim. v. 17); that they consolidated the Churches which the evangelists had founded, building up their members in the Faith; and that the terms "Elder" and "Bishop" (Acts xx. 17–28, Titus i. 5–7, 1 Tim. iii. 1) were interchangeably applied to those who were engaged in the work of the settled ministry.

In addition to elders and bishops mention is made of deacons five times in the New Testament (Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 8–10, 12, 13). There is no other reference to them; and as they find no place in the list of Church offices given in the Epistle to the Ephesians, it may be assumed that, as the term applied to them indicates *service*, they were assistants who attended to all the temporal interests of the congregation. This is confirmed by what is said as to the qualities which should distinguish them. They are domestic and moral (1 Tim. iii. 8–13), and not necessarily the higher spiritual qualities which belonged to Apostles, prophets, and teachers.

V

It is an interesting question how it came to pass that from the primitive organisation of Apostolic days the Church developed Episcopacy, with all its dignitaries and many offices, or Presbyterianism with its General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery. Instead, therefore, of restating what has already been said about the offices of bishops, elders, and deacons, attention may be directed to this question, and to the relative merits of the different ecclesiastical organisations which now obtain.

It is not without reason assumed that the prominent place assigned to James, the brother of our Lord, in the Church of Jerusalem, marks the beginning of the ascendancy of bishops; but in the Apostolic Church no claim was made on the part of any ruler or teacher for a position of extraordinary dignity and power, such as Episcopacy now gives to the Pontiff of Rome and to Archbishops in the English Church. The elder or bishop was simply *primus inter pares*. This carried with it no exclusive rights or privileges. At the head of the Church stood, not one bishop, but several rulers. This is conclusively shown from Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (i. 1), where bishops and deacons are mentioned collectively.

By the third century episcopacy was widely established. Already, indeed, at the beginning of the second century it was the Government of the Church in such places as Antioch and Ephesus; but for the first two centuries, at least, Presbyterian government obtained in Corinth and Philippi. Clement of Rome, as his Epistle to the Corinthians proves, knew nothing of one bishop as supreme. He himself was only a presbyter; and though he reprimanded the Corinthians for their needless division, it was only as a Christian teacher speaking to fellow-Christians. The Apostolic Constitutions and Canons attributed to Clement were productions of a far later time, and cannot, therefore, be quoted. Polycarp, too, in

his Epistle to Philippi, is silent as to bishops, but he has much to say about elders.

History, therefore, supports the statement that in the early Church both Episcopacy in a modified form and Presbyterianism were the organisations adopted in different places, and that in these early days, as at the present time, both were found suitable agencies through which the Church carried on her work. This is just what might have been anticipated; for Christianity never was, and is not now, dependent upon any one exclusive form of Church government. Its early history lends no support or even countenance to a hierarchy in which the Pope or Archbishop is supreme; and it is quite silent on the much-disputed question of the Apostolic Succession. No trace of it is found either in the New Testament or early Church history.

How the Church was left with freedom to develop her own organisation is perhaps better understood if it be recalled that the Apostles did not even attempt to put the great truths of the Christian Faith in hard and fast set terms, like those found in all creeds. They penned no creed. The so-called Apostles' Creed is not earlier than the second century. They proclaimed the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, and they unfolded and enforced the truths which they received. They transmitted them to posterity through the Church and in imperishable writings. But they attempted nothing corresponding to the elaborate Creeds afterwards used by Church Councils, and assent to which, it was often held, is essential to salvation. They left it to subsequent generations of Christians to express the truths of the Faith in their own language.

All that concerned them was that the truths be firmly, intelligently, and affectionately held. This secured, they knew that the apprehension of the whole content and implications of these truths would be necessarily progressive, and that the terms used by one generation might not suit another. They tacitly left the Church, therefore,

freedom of expression, and did not bind men by words or phrases. Sufficient justice has not been done to the insight, wisdom, and tolerance of the New Testament writers in thus granting such freedom ; but these qualities are plainly stamped upon their writings ; and what is still more important, they were frequently essential to those who founded the Church if Christianity was to meet the varying needs of men of all ages and their ever-changing conditions in all lands.

If, then, such freedom was allowed in relation to the expression of the content of the Faith, how much more might it be anticipated that the utmost latitude would be granted as to the ecclesiastical organisations which might be adopted, if only they were suitable media of worship, and easily worked agencies for the extension of the Kingdom of God. History is witness to this freedom. For the Church, whether she has adopted Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism, has widely departed from the adumbrated ecclesiastical organisations of the Apostles' day ; and yet all forms have been profitably employed. Again, whatever authority may be derived from the opinions and practice of Churchmen, like Ignatius and Cyprian, or from experience for a monarchical episcopacy with all its dignities and ceremonies, the New Testament knows nothing of it ; but this organisation has suited countless multitudes of Christians, just as Presbyterianism and Congregationalism have been to equal numbers appropriate organisations.

The conclusion, therefore, which may be legitimately drawn is, that since no hard and fast ecclesiastical polity is given in the New Testament, the Church is, within certain clearly defined lines, free to adopt that organisation which is a fitting expression of the spirit of Christianity, and an agency through which it can most effectively grow and extend.

It may seem somewhat out of place for one who draws this conclusion to offer anything like a criticism of the different organisations which are adopted, or even to

compare the one with the other. But to attempt either of these tasks is not really inconsistent with the conclusions which have been reached. For the exercise of freedom always carries with it certain responsibilities; and if freedom to adopt, say, Episcopacy, or Presbyterianism, or Congregationalism be exercised, the choice of any one of these ecclesiastical organisations lays on those who make it a definite obligation. They become members of a particular Church presumably because, in their opinion, it has Scriptural authority, and ministers most effectively to their spiritual needs and aspirations. They must, therefore, be true to their Church, submit to its regulations, and, while not denying to others the right of making their own choice, further its interests first and chiefly.

VI

All this is quite obvious; but now as to the relative merits of the different ecclesiastical organisations, it may be said of Episcopacy that it claims to be able to strengthen Church order and discipline, and to preserve a doctrinal and an historical unity; and that it does these things better than any other organisation. This claim can be easily made; but another issue is raised when proof of the claim is demanded. It should be said at once that Episcopacy certainly maintains a rigid Church order; but can the same be affirmed without question or doubt respecting discipline and doctrinal unity? Episcopacy, outside the Roman Catholic Church, seldom exercises discipline, and when it does make the attempt finds itself greatly hampered by formalities, with the result that of all Churches the Episcopalisn is perhaps least noted for strict discipline. Witness the ineffective endeavours made a few years ago to bring to book those clergymen of the English Church who approximated to the position of the Roman Catholic Church. The efforts invariably failed, and discipline was at a discount.

And as to doctrine, while it is the boast of many Episco-

palians that their Church is so wide as to embrace men of all opinions, on the other hand, they are bound by antiquated and narrow Creeds like the Athanasian in which few believe, and which almost all repeat with mental reservations. Her doctrinal unity is a very loose tie. It may be replied that this obsolete Creed is not essential to Episcopacy. Granted ; but what then is her doctrine ? and wherein consists its unity ? She cannot be so broad as many claim and at the same time have a definite creed. Much can be said in favour of Episcopacy as a well-working organisation, but it cannot with good reason be specially instanced as an agency which preserves discipline and doctrinal unity.

Congregationalism stands at the extreme from Episcopacy. It rejects all hierarchical pretensions, and also the imposition of a definite system of doctrines. Each congregation is a law to itself. Severe individualism is the distinguishing note of Congregationalism as an organisation. Since the days of Robert Browne (1550–1633) and John Robinson, a Brownist minister at Leyden (*circa* 1610) the congregational system has had its adherents. Cromwell favoured it, and in the famous Westminster Assembly five of the Divines were Independents. Though holding that each congregation is entirely exempt from extraneous jurisdiction, Congregationalists as early as 1658 convened a Synod, and drew up a *Declaration of the Faith and Order* ; and in recent times the International Council in London in 1891 witnesses to their recognition of the value of a central authority.

Congregationalism obtains only in Churches of English origin ; but those who defend it maintain that it is the genuine primitive form of Church government. Like other organisations, it may find some support in primitive Church practice ; but if it claims exclusive authority from this source, and asserts that it alone has Scriptural sanction, how comes it that nothing is heard of Congregationalism in the history of the Church till sectaries, like the Brownists, appeared in the seventeenth century ?

This organisation, like all others, must be tested by the ends which it serves, and its fitness to effect these ends. Tried by this standard, it does not make for Church order, or discipline, or doctrinal unity in any exceptional manner. The right which each congregation exercises to call to the ministry any man, whether well or ill educated, the facility with which a rich man in a congregation may displace a pastor who ventures to apply Christian ethics to the unscrupulous means by which wealth is often accumulated in modern times, and the actual frequent changes in pastorates, guarantee neither Church order nor discipline. And as for historical and doctrinal unity, none can be claimed, since each congregation is virtually independent of all others, and only related to them by loose ties of name and place.

Presbyterianism stands between Episcopacy and Congregationalism. It does not make for the creation of ecclesiastical dignitaries, nor does it leave congregations to do what they like. It strictly maintains the principle of *primus inter pares*. No one can exercise lordship over another. It may be alleged that "Presbyter is but Priest writ large." For such an allegation there is, however, no justification; for the Presbyterian organisation is the most democratic of all ecclesiastical polities. If superior airs be assumed by some Presbyterians, they find no authority for their pretensions in the constitution of the Church of which they are members. Presbyterianism is, therefore, at least a safeguard against sacerdotalism.

But it has much more in its favour. It gives, for instance, laymen their rightful place in the Church, all the members of which are "an holy priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 5) and "a Kingdom" (Rev. i. 6, v. 10). The right of the laity to take a part in the Church's work is now being gradually recognised even by High Churchmen.[1] But this right has always been secured in the Presby-

[1] See *Essays in Church Reform*, edited by Bishop Gore, and the place which laymen hold in the recently constituted Assembly of the Church of England.

terian order, which operates neither historically nor logically towards the rule of one man or one set of men.

Again, while no informed Presbyterian will claim that his Church alone has Scriptural authority, or will pretend to unchurch those who belong to another ecclesiastical organisation, it can be claimed that Presbyterianism is nearer to the organisation of the primitive Church than any other ecclesiastical system. All the offices which obtain in it are found in the New Testament; and though changes have been made in its constitution, these are of a minor kind, while the genius of the primitive Church is still retained.

Presbyterianism, too, makes for order, discipline, and doctrinal unity in a very direct and effective manner. Its history supplies abundant evidence in support of this claim. There have, unfortunately, been divisions; but these have almost all arisen from the Church's relation to the State, and the State's interference with the inherent freedom of the Church. In no other Church, however, have divisions been so rapidly healed; and to-day another great effort with every promise of success is being made to unite the two branches of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. And as for harmony and order in the Church services, nothing can excel the decorum of the Presbyterian form of worship. It may sometimes seem bald, but that is largely a question of custom and education. Within recent years, however, changes here, too, have been made, and these have ministered to more harmonious worship.

But while all these things are said in defence and commendation of Presbyterian organisation, it is not for a moment to be assumed that an exclusive claim is made on its behalf. The spirit of Christianity, as already stated, can accommodate itself to almost any form. Organisation, however, and that, too, which is nearest to the practice of the Apostolic Church, is necessary; but it is the spirit of the Christian Faith, and not its organisa-

tion, which has a right to rule men's thoughts and actions, to govern society, and to regulate international life.

The Church, it must be remembered, is but the agency of the Kingdom of God. The Church and the Kingdom are not one and the same. The Church is that through which the Kingdom is to be realised. The great Commission with which she is invested, and which gives her authority to preach the glad tidings to all men and build up her members in the Faith, will ever give her a sacred place in the hearts of all right-thinking people, and will also induce them to use the organisation which promotes most efficiently her usefulness. Within these limits, clearly and indubitably marked in the New Testament, the Church must be free to restate her doctrines in the language of the day, and also so to adjust her agencies as that the interests of the Kingdom of God will be served; for freedom is essential alike to the development of thought and to an ever clearer and clearer vision of the truth for the sake of which all ecclesiastical organisations exist.

CHAPTER XV

RELIGION AND ITS SACRAMENTS

I

All religions have their sacred rites. The psychology which accounts for their origin, and which also largely explains their powerful hold on human hearts, is easily analysed. The analysis can be successfully made when it is perceived and kept well in view that in human nature there is an almost insatiable craving both for authority on which the mind can rest in peace, and for what is veiled, hidden, mysterious. Religious rites claim to satisfy this craving, and that in a twofold way. They present that which is objective, which appeals to the outward senses, is seen and handled, visible ceremonies which if a man observes he may console himself that he has found "salvation" and is living the religious life.

They thus carry with them a certain authority on which he can rely. But they also present that which is subjective. They appeal to the emotions and call them into play. They temptingly make subjective states the standard and test of the moral life. By a process, therefore, which is altogether natural since they give a large place to feeling, quantitatively and qualitatively, they readily lapse into the sensuous, and become mechanical, artificial, and enslaving.

The Mystery Religions are the classical examples of sacred rites in which the craving for authority and for the mysterious is offered satisfaction both objectively and subjectively. They are also classical illustrations of the unobstructed way along which the votaries of the Mysteries travelled, and lost whatever philosophy of life

they once entertained, and whatever high morals were once within their vision, and became sensuous, debased, and immoral.

The term "Mysteries," if derived from μυεῖν, carries with it the idea of initiation. All the Mystery religions laid great stress upon initiatory rites. If taken from μύειν, it conveys the idea of what is unseen, hidden. One of the special marks of these religions was that of secrecy. The Mysteries were observed in many lands. They exerted a powerful influence wherever practised. They did not all, however, represent the same belief, nor were the cults always identical, though all claimed to make for salvation. The most famous of the Mysteries were those of Eleusis near Athens, and of Samothrace, both of which were State religions; in Asia Minor those of Attis and Cybele; and in Persia those of Mithras which made their way through Chaldæa, where Chaldæan astrology told upon the Persian cult, to Rome, where they were affected by the Mysteries of Attis, and therefore became an eclectic religion. The Orphic Mysteries commanded many votaries, for they were intimately connected with the cult of Bacchus. They embodied themselves in the Dionysiac religion.

Recent scholarship has thrown much light upon the Mystery religions. Sir W. M. Ramsay has made a successful effort to describe their sacred rites.[1] He takes the Clarian inscriptions found in the Sanctuary of Apollo of Klaros, and so vividly describes the steps and stages from the initiatory to the final rites as that one can picture to oneself the scenes which were often witnessed in the practice of the Mysteries. His description is valuable, since it brings into clear relief the moral and religious issues of the Mysteries, which are really the questions that count when an endeavour is made to estimate the value of religious rites.

At the present time it is much debated whether the

[1] See *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day*, pp. 288–296.

Mysteries contained a definite moral purpose, and to what extent St. Paul and his contemporaries were influenced by the Mysteries. The former question must be answered in the affirmative; for, apart from other evidence which might be adduced, the circumstance that they had vogue for many ages and in many lands is proof of a moral purpose in them. No religion can exist for any length of time which is devoid of morals. These may be obscured by rites and ceremonies, but their presence is that which justifies any religion, and accounts for its continuance.

When and where morals decay, religions, like societies, institutions, and even empires, come to a speedy end. The Mysteries of Isis are known to have embodied morals of a high value; but the ethical worth of most of the Mysteries is doubtful. All had some ethics, but ritual, as it so often operates even in a religion like Christianity, tended to their being obscured, and in the end the Mysteries were condemned on moral grounds. "Prayers, rites, incantations, magic arts, purifications, were," says Sir W. M. Ramsay, "called in to aid the struggling soul; but they were all earthly, fleshly, sensuous, and non-spiritual." [1] They thus destroyed the moral and religious spirit, and the Mystery religions therefore ceased to exist.

As to the influence of the Mysteries upon St. Paul and his contemporaries, there is now a consensus of opinion that though the great Apostle was intimately acquainted with them, they did not in the slightest degree affect either his faith or his teachings. There is no historical justification for M. Loisy's epigram that "the mystery of Paul's conversion is his conversion to the Mysteries."

Dr. Percy Gardiner, like M. Loisy, attaches much importance to the influence which the Mystery religions had upon St. Paul; [2] but Professor H. A. A. Kennedy has shown that though St. Paul dealt with converts who had an intimate knowledge of the Mystery religions, and

[1] See op cit., p. 302.
[2] *New Testament Theology*, vol. ii. p. 186.

though sometimes the ideas of these religions "found a remarkably close parallel in the thought of the Old Testament," yet "it is vain to endeavour to find points of contact between Paul and Mystery cults on the side of ritual."[1] The testimony of Sir W. M. Ramsay is equally conclusive, who affirms that Paul was "an uncompromising enemy of the religious ideas and thoughts embodied in the Mysteries." The Fathers of the Church, notably Clement of Alexandria, who in point of time stood near to the Mystery religions, exposed and condemned the practices which they sanctioned.

The Mysteries of the Greeks and Asiatics, with their sacramental efficacy, held, however, for many years a place in the hearts of tens of thousands of votaries; and a writer like Renan[2] maintains that they had such a place because they "appealed to religious sentiments and offered both hopes and consolations," but most authorities hold that the Mystery religions degraded morals and, as already stated, came to an end for that reason. When they flourished most prosperously and won many distinguished adherents, they had even then little of the missionary spirit, and were in no sense progressive. They had scarcely any influence upon Christianity. Both used common terms, but with very different connotations. It is true that Clement and Origen apply the language of the Greek Mysteries to the Christian gnosis, and life; but it is with a very different meaning from that intended by the apologists of the Mysteries. The day of the Mysteries passed, and few traces of any permanent good effected by them can now be found.

II

Evidence has already been adduced to prove that in the more primitive, as also in the great ethnic religions, a very prominent place was given to sacred rites. It is

[1] See *St. Paul and the Mystery Religions*, p. 281.
[2] See Renan's *Hibbert Lectures*.

not necessary to multiply this evidence. Enough has been brought forward to show that religion everywhere has its rites. Priesthood, with its sacrosanct claims, is common to almost all religions; and religious ceremonies always carry with them a certain fascination. So passionately do people cling to sacramental rites, that they often make the ceremonies an end in themselves. Their observance is taken as a substitute for the discharge of duties; and the perfection of the religious life itself is measured by the scrupulous attention which is paid to them.

That a certain amount of satisfaction is found in the observance of sacred rites is a common experience. The satisfaction is, however, limited. Man's deepest needs cannot be met, and the full growth of his moral powers cannot be effected, by even the most faithful performance of religious ceremonies. Man is a spiritual being, and the spiritual alone can satisfy him. In Christianity, the highest of all religions, less and less attention is paid to ceremonies, and that because they are not absolutely essential to the spiritual life or to moral growth. In Judaism rites superabound, but Judaism represents the religious life in its infancy; and at such an immature stage, as in the case of children at school, pictures and symbols are a necessity; or to vary the figure, in the erection of a mansion scaffolding is required, but when the house is completed all temporary platforms are removed and the building stands out in its noble proportions.

Religion thus in its beginnings needs the aid of external agencies. They are helps to faith, but as religious experience grows richer and fuller they are less and less required. This growth is "the note" of a progressive religion; and in no other religion is the progressive element so distinct as it is in Christianity. In it the moral and spiritual have precedence and command attention. The measure of the perfect man, as it clearly teaches, is, indeed, only attained when moral motives urge to disinterested action and spiritual ideals reign and rule one's life.

III

Christianity is not without its sacred rites. These, however, as they are described in the New Testament, are of the simplest kind. There are no gorgeous displays of tables and vestments. All is quiet, orderly, simple. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only two sacred rites sanctioned by the New Testament. A record of these alone is given; and they are the only rites which the Apostles observed and taught the members of the Christian Church to observe.

But Apostolic practice has not prevented a multiplication of rites. The Church of Rome has seven sacraments—baptism, confirmation, penance, matrimony, orders, the Mass, and extreme unction. These seven sacraments are said to counteract the seven deadly sins to which human nature is exposed. It need scarcely be stated that search is made in vain in the New Testament for these sacraments, and as for the exact number seven, alas! more than seven deadly sins assail humanity. Their name is legion. Where, for instance, is the sacrament which specially tells against worldliness, the most insidious of all evils, and one which shrivels up the soul's powers and produces the most callous treatment of men?

It is interesting to recall the history of these sacraments. In the early Church the term "sacrament" was applied to all things sacred, thanksgiving, prayers, etc., but in process of time it was limited to certain ceremonies. The term *μυστήριον* was associated with the Greek mysteries, and was applied to hidden rites and knowledge. The Vulgate is responsible for the use of the word "sacrament," for it translates *μυστήριον* by the term *sacramentum* (Eph. v. 32), and ever since the days of St. Jerome this term, though not a New Testament word, has been used when Christian rites are spoken of. Pliny's well-known reference to the word shows that it was in common use among Christians. Tertullian is, however, the first Christian writer who makes a special use of the term. But for cen-

turies great vagueness prevailed as to the rites and ceremonies to which it should be applied. "In the twelfth century, Hugo St. Victor, in his *De Sacramentis Christianæ Fidei*, enumerates as many as thirty sacraments which had been recognised by the Church." [1] The Council of Trent (1547), however, limited the term to seven rites; and the Reformers, returning to the teachings of the New Testament, applied it only to two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

IV

Baptism, as a sign and seal that the baptised belonged to the Christian Church, was appointed by our Lord (Matt. xxviii. 19) in the Apostolic Commission, and was observed by the Apostles (Acts ii. 41); and this is authority sufficient for its observance by the Church to-day. But baptism is not, as many mistakenly hold, a strictly initiatory rite. It is administered to those who have already believed in Christ and accepted Him as Saviour. These are already in the Church by their faith in Christ; and baptism is the confirmation and proclamation of the fact. Children born of Christian parents within the Church are also within it; and in their case, as in that of adults, baptism is the declaration that they are of the membership of the Church.[2]

But the baptism of children rests upon the additional grounds (1) that the historical continuity of the New Testament Church with the Old Testament Church is maintained, and that as children had a recognised place in the latter they cannot be excluded from the former. (2) That our Lord's words when He graciously received and blessed infants, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven,"

[1] See *The Sacraments in the New Testament*, by John C. Lambert, D.D., p. 12.

[2] Whoever cares to examine this view of infant baptism will find it fully explained and defended by Dr. W. Cunningham in his *Historical Theology*, chap. xxii.

clearly indicate that if they have a place in the Kingdom of God they must also belong to and be recognised as members of the Church, enjoying all the privileges which they are capable of receiving. (3) That again and again the Apostles baptised whole households in which there must have been many children. (4) That when first at Pentecost three thousand and afterwards five thousand persons were admitted to the Church it cannot be conceived that children were excluded from the Church. (5) That the Fathers of the Church, notably Origen, declare infant baptism to be a sacred rite received from the Apostles, and that they baptised children and recognised them as in the Church.

The mode of baptism and the formula are subjects which have received much attention. It is perhaps sufficient to say respecting the former that, while the word *βαπτίζω* as often means affusion as immersion, the act itself is symbolical (2 Cor. x. 2), as were the symbolical washings of the Levitical law (Ezek. xxxvi. 25), and can be performed by sprinkling, just as the Lord's Supper, which is no longer a full meal, can be observed by eating a small piece of bread and sipping a little wine. Those who insist upon total immersion, which could not have been easily practised in the case of the eight thousand Pentecostal converts, or in the house of the Philippian jailor, must, if they are to be consistent, sit down to a full supper every time that they observe the Holy Communion. But no one thinks of doing such a thing. The Lord's Supper is a sacred rite in which the simplest elements are sufficient to recall the death of Christ, and in the sacramental use of which the great benefits of His redemptive work are confirmed and sealed to the reverent communicant. And, in the same manner, baptism can be administered by the use of a little water.

As to the formula used in the act of baptism, it is given in the Apostolic commission: "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into

the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

Three prepositions—εἰς as in Acts viii. 16, xix. 5, and Romans vi. 3, ἐν in Acts x. 48, and ἐπί in Acts ii. 38—are used in reference to baptism. Of these εἰς, the one oftenest employed, is also that which expresses most fully the sacramental declaration that the baptised, whether infant or adult, is within the Church. There is, however, nothing in the formula to warrant belief in baptismal regeneration, or to justify one in holding that baptism as an outward act contains power inherent in itself and *ex opere operato* effects a moral change. It seems at first to have been administered by any one in office. It was only when baptism was regarded as a means of regeneration that it was held to be necessary to salvation, and could only be administered by a priest.

Baptism is a sacred rite, and must always be observed with solemnity and order. As to its real value, when the full import of the words "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" are realised, then it is perceived that all the benefits and gifts of the Divine redemption belong potentially to the baptised child, but that each baptised child must subsequently, by a free act of will and a strenuous personal endeavour, give actuality to all that the sacrament of baptism represents and confirms. In this way it is guarded from becoming a superstitious rite; and in this way, too, it operates as a powerful motive to parents to impress their children as they grow in years with a due sense of the sacred privileges they enjoy; and to adults it is also a motive to live worthy of their calling.

V

The institution, history, and practices of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper have a fascination which scarcely belongs to any other subject or subjects. The most sacred experiences have been enjoyed by tens of thousands

in all ages and lands as they have sat at the Table. Their deepest emotions have been awakened, and their minds thrilled by a clear vision of what Christ their Lord has suffered for them, and the priceless gifts which He has bestowed upon them.

It is not, therefore, surprising that this sacred rite has evoked interest and attention. Perhaps the first question which arises is that as to the circumstances connected with its institution. It had its origin at the Passover, and many, therefore, associate it with that Jewish Feast. The Passover was a complicated ritual with its Paschal lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened cakes, and four wine-cups. Almost all authorities are agreed that when the fourth cup of wine was lifted, and the second part of the Hallel, Psalms cv–cviii, was being sung, our Lord took a piece of the unleavened bread, and "blessed and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 26–8, Rev. Ver.).

There are some, however, who without any authority connect the Lord's Supper with Old Testament sacrificial feasts, while others give to it no higher place than that of making it a supper like the common meals of the fraternities of the day. Dr. Armitage Robinson connects it with the ordinary Jewish meal; he questions its association with the Passover, and finds the sacramental formula in the simple formula used by the Jews at their ordinary meal.[1] Some, relying upon the statements in Mark xiv. 2 and in John xiii. 29, xviii. 28, hold that the Supper was instituted before the Passover day, and had no connection with the regular Passover meal; but the Synoptic Gospels are quite explicit as to the time, and their direct testimony cannot be easily set aside. Besides, to take the institution of the Lord's Supper

[1] See *Encyclopædia Biblica*, article "Eucharist."

in connection with the Passover enables one to perceive how the Old Testament Church passed into the New Testament Church; how the old dispensation, with its elaborate ceremonies, passed away, and the new, with its simple rites, took its place; and how prophecy received its fulfilment and a highly spiritual religion was substituted for a legal service.[1]

Intimately connected with the history of the Holy Communion is the Agapé or Love Feast of the early Christian Church. That the Agapé, a religious as well as a social function, was at first held at the place where, and at the time when, the Lord's Supper was observed, and that it was closely associated with common meals, is now generally acknowledged. Greek and Roman, as well as Jewish, usage led the early Christians to a common feast. The Agapé at its inception was a common meal; next, it was a charity supper provided by the rich for the poor; and as time went on some liturgical importance was attached to it. The Love Feast, indeed, grew in complexity of observances with lapse of time until abuses on a large scale so abounded as to cause its abandonment for a long period; but when subsequently revived, as it has been in some churches, it was shorn of its ritual and was a simple feast.

At first, however, and for a considerable time, the observance of the Lord's Supper and the Agapé at the same place and time led to much misunderstanding. Tertullian speaks of the Eucharist and Love Feast as the sacraments of our religion,[2] and doubtless many made the one dependent upon the other. The combination of the Eucharist with a common meal is recognised in the Didaché, which belongs to the close of the first century. Whoever familiarises himself with the numerous Greek and Roman religious rites, and thinks himself back into

[1] See Canon Trevor's *Catholic Doctrine of the Sacrifice and Participation of the Holy Eucharist* and Dr. Bickell's *The Lord's Supper and Passover Ritual* for a good account of this question.

[2] *To the Nations*, i. 16.

the position in which the early Christians were placed in relation to them can easily perceive what influence these rites exercised upon them. It was largely this influence which led to the abuses connected with the Agapé.

The Greek and Roman brotherhoods or guilds flourished everywhere. There were literary, dramatic, athletic, and also labour guilds such as tanners', dyers', carpenters', potters', and even rag-gatherers' brotherhoods.[1] The Greek eranoi, thiasoi, and philitia, the Roman collegia and sodalicia, were in part religious and in part social and trade associations. They existed, indeed, for religious purposes, mutual fellowship, and trade improvements, though they were not defensive associations as modern Trades Unions are. The religious elements obtained in almost all of them, and their religious practices were also strictly enforced. The early Christians were much attracted to these guilds or brotherhoods; but they could not regard with approval or take any part in their idolatrous rites. For this reason they made their own Agapé, which expressed Christian fellowship or communion *κοινωνία*, and which was kept at the close of the observance of the Eucharist.[2] But adversely influenced by heathen practices the Love Feast soon degenerated. Abuses crept in, and a superstitious power was ascribed to the feast. It was doubtless these abuses which led to the separation of the Lord's Supper from the Agapé. They were dissociated in Justin Martyr's time in the middle of the second century, and in Tertullian's day at the close of the same century; but Cyprian, in the middle of the third century, says that there were still some Christians who united them. The abuses connected with the Agapé were, however, too patent, and it was discontinued, or at least separated from the Lord's Supper.

This separation of the Eucharist from the Agapé must

[1] See Dr. Hatch's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 26, and his work *The Organisation of the Early Christian Church*, pp. 26–28.

[2] See *The Sacraments in the New Testament Church*, by J. C. Lambert, p. 340.

not, however, be taken as implying that guilds or fraternities were not good and useful institutions. Plato gives them a prominent place in his *Republic*; and Xenophon describes Socrates as regulating brotherhoods with a view to all members enjoying equality. In trade, social life, and religion they have still their own place, and are most useful agencies; but as applied to religion they are in no sense sacramental, though this was the mistake which the early Christians made when, following the example of Tertullian, they held that the Agapé, like the Lord's Supper, is a sacrament of the Christian religion.

VI

It is only, as already stated, Baptism and the Lord's Supper which can be described as sacraments of the Christian Church. Enough has perhaps been said respecting the former, and now the latter deserves special attention. In the affections of the Christians of the first century the Lord's Supper held a sacred place, as indeed it still has in the hearts of Christians to-day. When they met together it was to recall in the most solemn manner the death of Christ. For many years the observance of the Supper was, the New Testament writers being witnesses, carried out in the simplest way; but as time went on there gradually increased the craving for ritual which is native to the human heart as that which gives objective authority for one's beliefs, and promises satisfaction in relation to things hidden and mysterious.

This is the temptation which has assailed all religions. It asserts its influence in the great ethnic religions, as has been already pointed out; and it is seen in the severe contest which was carried on in the Old Testament Church between priests and prophets, the former being all for ritual, and the latter for conduct distinguished by justice, mercy, and humility (Mic. vi. 8, Hos. vi. 6). The New Testament Church did not escape the same temptation; and no astonishment need be expressed at the evolution

of an elaborate hierarchical system of ritual, or at the pronouncement of Ignatius that "it was not lawful to observe the Eucharist apart from bishops." [1]

One can thus understand the philosophy of ritualism, how it originated and how it persists, and also how the Fathers of the Church elaborated a ritual cult, and the Schoolmen developed hierarchical claims. But if one goes not only beyond the Reformation, and not only beyond Scholastic doctrines and Patristic theology, but back to the New Testament, it is difficult to understand how ritualistic practices should be either advocated or defended by those who reverence the name of Christ and see clearly His insistence upon *spirit* and good conduct as alone essential and all-important.

But the Lord's Supper is misapprehended and misused. Some ritually over-estimate it, and give it a mechanical inherent power which the New Testament does not claim for the sacrament; others, following Zwingli, who taught that *Coena Dominica non aliud, quam commemorationis nomen meretur*,[2] make the Supper a sign and nothing more. There is no justification for either of these misconceptions of the design and nature of the Holy Communion. It is a memorial, and recalls the death of Christ, but it is more; for when it is reverently observed Christ is present not as to His body, but as to His spirit, and not only gives a reassurance of remission of sins, but also confirms and seals all the benefits of His redemptive work to the reverent believing communicant. There is no transubstantiation of the sacramental elements; the bread and wine are given and received, but they are given and received sacramentally; and in the *giving and receiving* of the elements lies the true sacramental action. It is at that moment the sacrament is observed, the death of Christ is recalled, and also the love which explains His death. Then, too, the humble communicant can stretch out his hand and by an act of faith appropriate

[1] Epistle to the Smyrræns, chap. viii.
[2] See *Zwingli's Collected Works*, vol. ii. p. 85.

as his own all that Christ, as Redeemer, has secured for him. These are the great ends which the Holy Communion serves.

But an entirely different representation of the Lord's Supper is given when, according to the sacramental principle of the High Churchman, the rite in itself is held to contain an inherent power, and the sacrifice of the Cross is repeated by the action of the sacrificing priest; or when, according to the Roman Church, both of these things hold true, and in addition, the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the *intention* of the priest who administers it. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrificial offering in the sense of being propitiatory. It is, indeed, to be regretted that the term "sacrifice" is ever used in connection with the sacrament. Canon Trevor defends its use,[1] and argues that though the word is not applied to the Lord's Supper in the New Testament, yet as sacrament—a non-New Testament term—is employed, so can the word "sacrifice." But the two terms carry with them different connotations; and there is always the danger that the uninformed may, in using the word "sacrifice," or in hearing it used, associate propitiation with it. This, indeed, is often done, and the danger is not imaginary.

Enough has perhaps been said on questions of controversy. It is sufficient if a clear, though a necessarily brief, statement has been made as to the different views which are entertained respecting the institution, history, and practices of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It may, however, in the light of this statement, be claimed that ample evidence has been adduced to prove that religion, whatever its content, has always its sacraments; that these respond to a craving, perhaps also to a need, of the human heart; and that however valuable or desirable they may be, their observance should not be allowed to obscure the deeper necessities of the spirit of man, or be taken as a substitute for genuine piety and beneficent conduct.

[1] Op. cit., p. 3.

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGION AND ITS NECESSITY

I

Ecclesiastical agencies, even the most perfect of them, are but means to an end. Religion itself counts and is of supreme value. Its necessity, therefore, is apparent. From what has already been stated it may be assumed that this necessity lies at the root of all questions as to the content of religion, and its implications; but the necessity itself deserves consideration.

Much light is thrown on religion and its necessity from many quarters, but the subject is only rightly understood when one stands in the Presence of Christ and reverently listens to His interpretation of human life. When our Lord raised the question and asked, "What can be an equivalent for a man's life?" (Matt. xvi. 26) the Cross was already in view. He uttered, however, His great and weighty words on the meaning and end of life not as under the depression of spirit which it might have produced, but under the influence of His consciousness of the end of His own life. Shafts of light penetrated the growing darkness, and He spoke as one who knew the sufferings through which He was to pass, but who also saw the issue of His passion in humanity redeemed. He consented to die, but the valley of His deep humiliation was the path to His glorification, the Cross the way to the Crown; and He intimated plainly to His followers that only in the light of that end is human life correctly read.

But self-sacrifice, as the way to enduring honour, was a new conception of life's course and goal. It was also one difficult to grasp, and perhaps still more hard to act upon as true. It ran directly counter to all preceding

instruction. Even the men who were honoured with Christ's special friendship, and had enjoyed for nearly three years tuition from Him, were evidently incapable of apprehending it. For when our Lord spoke of His sufferings and death, Peter, perhaps little realising what he was doing, daringly ventured to take Him apart, and, marvel of marvels, actually to rebuke Him. It is possible with the help of the historical imagination to picture the scene which was then witnessed: Peter taking hold of Jesus's arm, and with little or no reverence drawing Him aside from the other Apostles, and then with troubled countenance, but also with a great misunderstanding heart, he dared to remonstrate with Him, and to rebuke Him. Bold, impetuous Peter! There he stands discharging his self-imposed task.

But the scene is quickly changed; for Jesus, standing apart whither Peter had drawn Him, and instantly releasing Himself from Peter's hold "turned about and looked on the disciples." His eyes held their surprised attention; and as they listened with deeply subdued feelings to the words which fell from the Master's lips, they must at once have assented to the justice of the severe rebuke: "Get thee behind Me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men." Thus the rashness and moral blindness of Peter met their due reward.

The words that immediately follow show in the plainest manner that our Lord read the meaning of life in the light of the *End* of His own life; for He at once added, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mark viii. 34–5).

Are not these words enigmatical and somewhat of a riddle? No; for the apparent contradiction which they seem to suggest is at once resolved if due attention be paid to the life which Christ lived, and its *End*. He Himself took up His Cross and bore it. His was a life of self-

denial and service. He never hesitated in the path of duty. He surrendered His life, but He found it again, and found it, too, in greatest honour along the way of self-sacrifice. He thus illustrated His own profound and life-illuminating saying, " Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit " (John xii. 24).

It should be carefully observed that our Lord spoke to men out of His own full personal experience. He both taught and by His actions plainly showed how human life can alone be enriched, developed, and realised. The truths which found a place in His teachings He thus verified by His own life. His words are never abstract statements. They glow with spirit and are of universal application. There is no exception to them. The essence of His teaching is that self-sacrifice makes for life, and, indeed, secures it, while self-seeking, instead of making for personal gain, spells irreparable loss ; and that whoever through personal devotion to Him, and inspired by the glad tidings of His message, spends his life in selfless service, saves His life, and finds it in fullest bloom and richest fruit.

It is not, then, at all surprising that the background on which Christ set the question, " What should a man give in exchange for his life ? " is full of truths which He Himself both taught and exemplified. It resembles that of the artist who gives to every detail of his picture the most perfect possible treatment in order that he may set in clear relief his representation of the main conception which it is his object to embody and express. So in this instance truths of the supremest value, and which our Lord had enunciated, are set out in detail. On them, as on a well-prepared background, is placed in the utmost prominence the vital and searching question, " What should a man give in exchange for his life ? " As one looks at the picture thus drawn the instinctive reply which one makes is, that there is not anything that is an equivalent for a man's life ; and that it is folly to disregard the necessity of religion, which can alone satisfy his deepest needs and crown his life.

The question, therefore, which our Lord raised and placed in a rich setting of truths, enunciated and verified by Himself, deserves thoughtful reflection. It assumes that the self-seeking man may attain to the summit of his ambition; but what then? What if he forfeits his life? What again, if this be his loss, is his profit? The answer to these questions is all too plain. His profit is nothing, and his loss is immeasurable.

II

It might be reasonably assumed that, with the possibility of this loss before their minds, men everywhere would give earnest and unremitting attention to the necessity of living a religious life. But tens of thousands live all careless as to this necessity. Some are engrossed with business with which they do not allow religion to interfere; others with pleasure, which for them is the goal of life; while many deliberately say that the religious life does not appeal to them, and that they can live as good a life as any who make a profession of religion. Vast numbers, too, not perhaps courageous enough to discard religion openly and altogether, accept it as a factor in their lives half-heartedly, and give it nothing more than a formal assent.

But can religion on any ground be safely neglected? Is its deliberate rejection justifiable? Or can excuse be found for those who only accede to its claims in a half-hearted manner? These questions are emphasised by the far-reaching issues which are at stake; for man's life, now and in the future which stretches into eternity, is deeply affected by his attention or inattention to his religious duties.

It should be noted that our Lord in calling attention to the claims of religion assumes that men eagerly seek for what, in their judgment, will make for their personal benefit. He recognises the operations of a legitimate individualism; for men strive after what seems to secure personal benefits; and personal interest is the motive of much which they attempt to do. This motive is, indeed, powerful, universal, and within certain limits also quite legitimate.

Our Lord allows this motive its place. He is far, however, from acknowledging that it is the highest, or even adequate for life. He does not, therefore, say anything by way of commending it. In His teachings He gives the first place to devotion to Himself, to conduct inspired by love, gratitude, and self-sacrifice. He sets these motives on a high plane. He exhibits their moral beauty, and often speaks of their conquering power. But at the same time He takes man as he is, striving after personal benefits, or what appears to him to secure such benefits. He sees man with his present pursuits. He appeals to a widely prevailing motive, a motive which has almost universal rule. He then sets the personal life on the one side, and the things which a man may possess on the other; and taking man as he is, He presses home the question, what of these possessions will a man, who has even only a dim apprehension of his possible destiny, not give in exchange for his life?

He raises this question; but He does not at once return a direct answer to the inquiry. It was not, indeed, His custom to give an immediate answer to His own questions. He evidently put them with design in such a form as would necessitate reflection; for He required a deliberate choice on the part of those to whom He made His appeals. The answer, it is true, is almost always quite obvious; but He intentionally threw men back upon their own thoughts, and thus obliged them to make choice of the ways that lay before them.

It was thus that He acted when He raised the questions: Could a man safely and wisely neglect the claims of his own life? Is not that life of the very highest value? And what, if anything, is its equivalent? In this manner He places the personal life in prominent view. He makes that life, with its infinite value and high possible destiny, the chief object of interest. All other things shade off and are lost to sight as the light of the stars is lost to view when the sun rises in its brightness. The personal life thus stands out alone and conspicuous; and as in bold relief it occupies a commanding position one can almost hear it uttering loudly and persistently its claims for attention.

When our Lord's question is thus studied in the full light of the value of the personal life, when that life is seen in its rightfully commanding place, and in the atmosphere which well-informed thoughts respecting its infinite value create, the urgency and supreme importance of the question itself become quite apparent. But still Jesus did not give an immediate answer to His own question. He knew that reflection, whenever men allowed themselves to ponder over the meaning and end of their lives in the clear light of His own words, would return a correct reply; and it was reflection, in the first instance, which He aimed at awakening.

Let a man, then, become aware of the value of his life; let him clearly perceive how his life alone can be developed and enriched; let him realise the vast potentialities of his life, and see all things in their right perspective which play upon and mould his life; let him further ask, what should he not willingly surrender in exchange for his life? And the answer which he will instantly return is that there cannot be anything in the whole world which is a real equivalent for his life, and that all should be sacrificed in order to secure and guarantee it.

If this be a correct statement of the design of our Lord's words, and if these conclusions can be legitimately drawn from a definite question which He raised, then the further inference must be made, that it is neither safe to neglect religion nor wise to overlook its necessity. But its urgency is emphasised when account is taken of the evil that is in man's life, and the question is raised, How can that evil be removed? It is widely, if indeed not universally, recognised that man stands in a relation of dependence upon and responsibility to God. When this relationship is rightly apprehended, what thoughts arise in the mind, and what feelings in the heart! Man knows that he has not discharged one tithe of the duties which his relation to God entails. He knows himself, too, responsible for his misdeeds, and there are few who, in the more serious moments of life, have not their fears as to the retribution which awaits them.

The question of questions, therefore, is, How can sin be taken away? How can its *reatus*, liability to punishment, be removed? How can one attain to a sense of freedom and live a new life inspired by devotion to the will of God, and devoted to securing the well-being of men?

III

Many answers have been given to this question, but when these are analysed they are reduced to two categories; the one, that of works, and the other that of grace. With fine insight St. Paul clearly perceived that men burdened with the weight of sin, and longing to be delivered from it in order that they might be able to live the larger life, have given themselves either to the performance of meritorious works, or, depending on Divine grace, have cast themselves upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. St. Paul discussed especially the position of the Jews who persistently held by the ceremonial law, and professed to attain thereby to freedom; but the principle for which he contended strikes at the roots of all ritual, and proves that when ritualism in any form is unduly pressed it passes into *works* as that by which one is saved, and is also enabled to live the new life.

Now, ritualism has its own place, and when rightly used it ministers to devotion, an element in the religious life at all times desirable. The rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer may, for instance, be observed with much benefit to worshippers; and experience many times repeated proves that they are a distinct aid to devotion. In Churches where no rubric is imposed one sees to-day many efforts made to render the Church service a more befitting expression of devotional thought and feeling. Praise and prayer receive more attention and this with the approval of almost all worshippers.

But the danger which attends all forms and ritual is very persistent. Ceremonies easily pass into legalism; and legalism is a return to Judaism. The recent history of the Church of England supplies a striking illustration of this danger. In that Church many beginning with a

legitimate use of a ritual have developed a passion for rites and ceremonies for which the Book of Common Prayer gives no authority. Lights on the altar, the use of incense, mixing water with the sacramental wine, the undue importance attached to wearing alb and chasuble, insistence on the Eastward Position as essential to acceptable worship, and the observance of Stations of the Cross, have led to bitter wranglings and sharp divisions within the Church. They have also invoked the power of the civil courts. The Court of Appeal in 1868, and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1871, condemned most of these practices, and the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1875 provided means for giving effect to their decisions. This is the fruit of the passion for vestments and posturings which are often closely related to unreality. Many captured by this passion have logically and consistently passed into the Church of Rome, within which ritualism and its offspring, legalism, have full sway.

Reference is made to this recent history of the English Church mainly for the purpose of bringing into prominence the categories of *works* and *grace*. Upon one or other all rely who are deeply concerned with the question of the forgiveness of sin, and how the new life can be lived. Forms and ceremonies may appeal to the emotions. They have, therefore, a legitimate and, one might say, a necessary use; but when unduly pressed, when employed as essentials, and not only as means, when valued more than truth, they logically develop into legalism and a system of works as that by which one is saved and is enabled to live a higher life.

Now, whatever may be claimed for this system, it is certain that the New Testament writers set it entirely aside. They disclaimed works as that by which man can be saved: "Not by works which we have done," writes St. Paul, "but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 5, 6). "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves;

it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). And as to the new life, the testimony is equally plain that it is not lived by the observance of ceremonies, for St. Paul affirms, "the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20).

It is not necessary to repeat passages which are well known; but it may be recalled that what all the Apostles taught was essentially what Christ Himself insisted on.[1] He required a personal trust in Himself, saying that whosoever believes in Him shall "not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). He taught that the life of those who believe in Him is sustained by living in union with Him. His affectionate appeal to them was, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me" (John xv. 4). His teachings as to how life is obtained and sustained are often repeated; and it is not at all surprising that the Apostles should have given to them the utmost prominence.

Of the two ways, then, by which the religious life is attempted and its necessity is met, the New Testament writers know only that of grace. But such is the gift of grace and its operations that there is laid upon those who receive the gift a sacred obligation to live not for themselves, but rather to spend their lives in selfless service; for, grace is not given that forthwith one may do whatever one likes. St. Paul saw that such a misconstruction might be made, and he at once anticipated it by affirming,

[1] The historical school of theology, represented by writers like Dr. Lake and Dr. Percy Gardiner, makes a distinction between the teachings of Christ and those of St. Paul; but liberty to assume redactions of the Gospels, and also to say what is and what is not authentic in the New Testament, must first be conceded to the members of this school before the distinction can be allowed. If an appeal be made to history as to the development of early Christian beliefs into the Pauline teachings, the history itself is too brief and too scanty to justify the large deductions which are made from the scarce evidence which is at hand; and here as elsewhere subjective leanings rather than history determine the conclusions of this school.

"ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Rom. vi. 14, 15). The impossibility of continuing in a course of wrong-doing is self-evident. Grace is conferred in order that deliverance from sin's curse may be effected; and it is continued in order that all who come under its kindly operations may, by obedience to the demands of righteousness and the claims of love, live a life of true moral nobility.

IV

Such a life alone fully answers to the necessity of religion. It is at all times imperative; it is specially needful to-day. The war which has devastated Europe has also awakened a new spirit. Men who stood together in the trenches, and fought for a common cause, displaying remarkable patience, courage, and self-sacrifice, knew themselves knit together by the hallowed ties of brotherhood. Life became to them real and earnest. A new spirit beat in their breast.

What, then, is likely to be the outcome of the war? How will the new condition of things which it has created be treated? And what part will religion play? The experience of the wars of a hundred years ago will most probably be repeated; for unless a healthy religious influence be brought to bear upon and direct the new spirit, the same fruit may be gathered. The French Revolution, with all its horrors, effected one definite object. It awoke the spirit of freedom; and from Paris, its centre, and round its whole circumference in Europe, the beats and throbs of the spirit of liberty were felt. Shortsighted people scoff at the use of the terms "liberty," "equality," and "fraternity." They do not see that common hardships and a common cause knit men together, and that aspirations after a better social life are the natural results of common sufferings and endeavours.

Europe was perhaps not sufficiently educated a hundred years ago to be able to utilise and direct the new spirit then awakened. Then, too, men misapprehending very grievously what makes for life, greedily exploited the

new Movement. Selfishness ruled and reigned in politics and commerce ; and even in religion a narrow individualism obtained.

Again, man's conception of life is being tested and tried. Already a big effort is being made to capture the newly awakened interest in life by the Roman Catholic Church in France. Thousands to-day flock to the Church services who formerly neglected them ; but a religion which rests upon priestly authority can never satisfy men's aspirations. Religion of a high spiritual, moral, and social character is offered to-day an opportunity which, if neglected, may not be given again for many years. The utmost urgency, indeed, lies at the back of the appeal which is made to men to reflect upon the value of life. There is not any possession which should not be sacrificed in order to secure " the life that is life indeed." Religion's necessity lies deeply rooted in the wants of the human soul ; it is folly, and irreparable loss, not to give earnest attention to these wants.

But religion is also a powerful factor in social life. It is that which purifies and elevates society. Great imperial and international questions have already arisen. Grave industrial disputes already claim attention. Social betterment necessitates reforms. To the solution of all these questions Christianity makes its invaluable contribution. It does not declare for hard and fast schemes ; but it supplies the spirit in which all endeavours can be crowned with success. The spirit is disinterested, and is inspired by righteousness and love. Christian men and women must, therefore, obey its leading ; and when they realise that they owe all they are and possess to grace ; when they fearlessly apply the ethics of their Faith to life, social, national, and international ; and when for the Master's sake and in the interests of His Kingdom they give themselves to service, religion and all its claims will be justified, and its necessity not only rendered apparent, but it will also be seen that by religion and the spirit which it imparts man is enriched and ennobled, and society is regenerated and transformed.

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